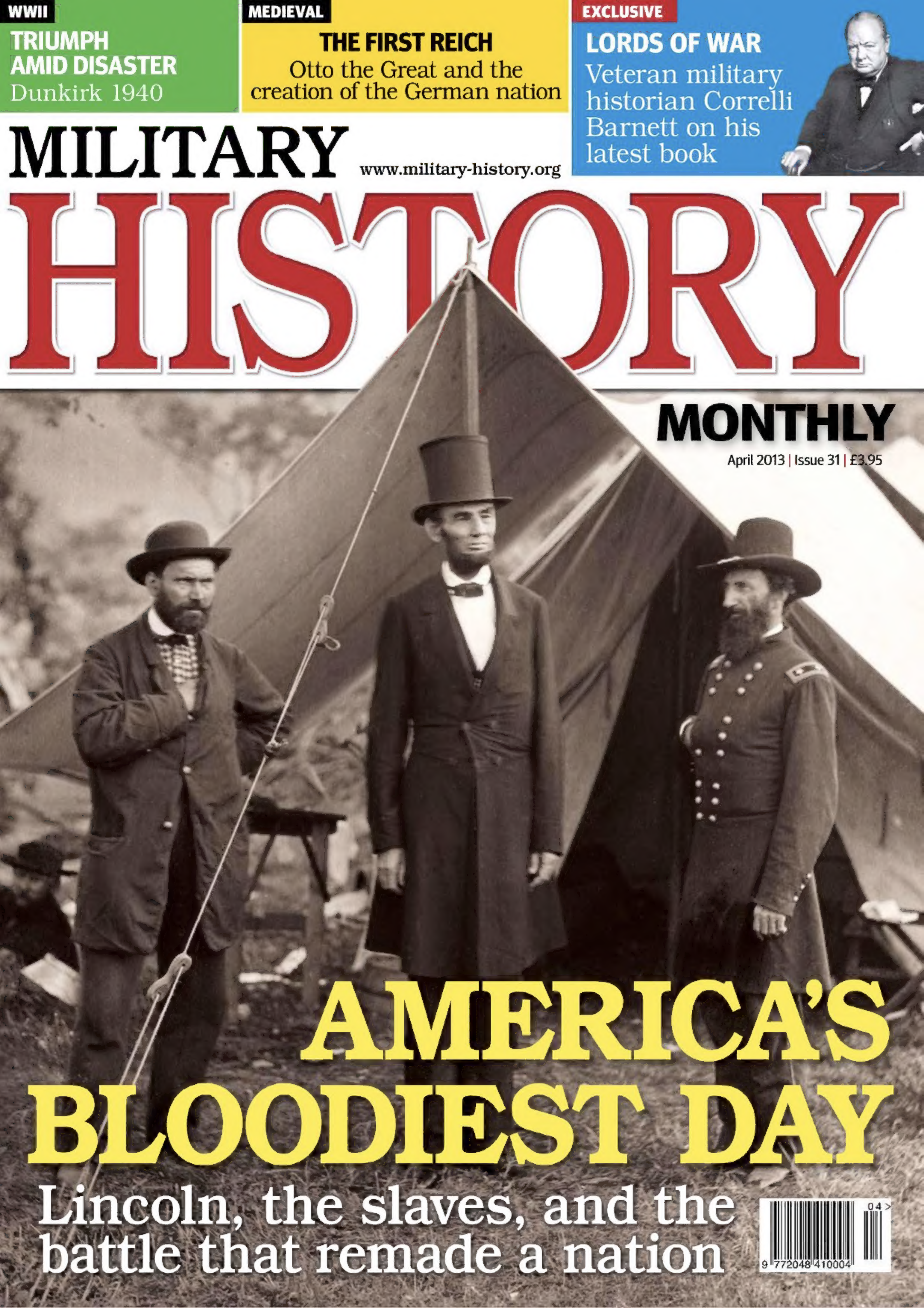




WWII
**TRIUMPH
AMID DISASTER**
Dunkirk 1940

MEDIEVAL
THE FIRST REICH
Otto the Great and the
creation of the German nation

EXCLUSIVE
LORDS OF WAR
Veteran military
historian Correlli
Barnett on his
latest book



MILITARY HISTORY

www.military-history.org

MONTHLY

April 2013 | Issue 31 | £3.95

AMERICA'S BLOODIEST DAY

Lincoln, the slaves, and the
battle that remade a nation



Find more issues at magazinesdownload.com
"WARS MAY BE FOUGHT WITH WEAPONS, BUT THEY ARE WON BY MEN."

GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON



HISTORY

LEGENDS OF WAR™

OUT NOW!

A turn-based strategy game like no other – combining strategy, tactics & RPG elements with exciting 3D action, immersing you in the bloody conflicts of WW2 from the beaches of Normandy to the war torn streets of Berlin.



BUY NOW:

amazon.co.uk

GAME
RELOADED

play.com

zavvi.com

AVAILABLE ON:

PS3

PlayStation 3

PSVITA

PlayStation Vita



XBOX 360

PC
DVD
ROM

WWW.PQUBE.CO.UK/LEGENDSOFWAR



@LEGENDS_OF_WAR



WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/LEGENDSOFWARGAME

pqube



SLITHERINE

©2012 Slitherine Ltd. All rights reserved. Developed by Enigma Software Productions and Slitherine Ltd. All rights reserved. Legends of War, Slitherine Ltd., Matrix Games Ltd., and their logos are all trademarks of Slitherine Ltd. HISTORY and the 'H' logo are registered trademarks of A&E Television Networks, LLC. All rights reserved. PlayStation 3 and PS3 are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. All rights reserved.



ON THE COVER:

An Alexander Gardner photograph of President Abraham Lincoln taken in October 1862 during the Battle of Antietam.

Photo Alexander Gardner/Library of Congress

Who we are:

Military History Monthly aims to cover conflict on land, at sea, and in the air through all periods of history, with expert commentary written in an intelligent and accessible way.

Editorial Advisory Board:

Martin Brown Archaeological Advisor, Defence Estates, Ministry of Defence, **Mark Corby** Former Army Officer, military historian, lecturer, and broadcaster, **Paul Cornish** Curator, Imperial War Museum, **Gary Gibbs** Assistant Curator, The Guards Museum, **Angus Hay** Former Army Officer, military historian, and lecturer, **Nick Hewitt** historian, Research and Information Office, Imperial War Museum, **Nigel Jones** historian, biographer, and journalist, **Alastair Massie**, Head of Archives, Photos, Film, and Sound, National Army Museum, **Gabriel Moshenska** Research Fellow, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, **Colin Pomeroy** Squadron Leader, Royal Air Force (Ret.), and historian, **Michael Prestwich** Emeritus Professor of History, University of Durham, **Nick Saunders** Senior Lecturer, University of Bristol, **Guy Taylor** Former Army Officer, military archivist and archaeologist, **Julian Thompson** Major-General, and Visiting Professor, Department of War Studies, London University, **Dominic Tweddle** Director-General, National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Welcome

By Dr Neil Faulkner



Abraham Lincoln was a politician, not a soldier. Yet, with the release of Steven Spielberg's new blockbuster biopic, we have a special focus this issue on America's most iconic president. Coincidentally, veteran military historian Correlli Barnett has just published a new book, *The Lords of War*, which opens with an assessment of Lincoln as a politico-military genius.

Our Lincoln-themed coverage includes a major feature article on Antietam, a review of the Spielberg film, and an interview with Correlli Barnett.

Lincoln emerges as a figure who towered over his epoch, having a strategic grasp that was truly Clausewitzian in his ability to see the struggle that dominated mid-19th-century US history in all its totality and grandeur. Lincoln synthesised all the myriad complexities and contradictions of the conflict – both political and military – and crystallised them into a vision of how the war could be won, the Union saved, and America given 'a new birth of freedom'.

Lincoln's greatness resided in the completeness with which he personified the new America being forged in the violence of civil war – a war to destroy slavery and recreate the nation on the principles proclaimed by the infant Republican Party: 'Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labour, and Free Men'.

Also this issue, we have Jack Watkins' analysis of the little-known Battle of Lechfeld in AD 955, which created the First German *Reich*, and Roger Broad's assessment of Ronald Adam, the 'radical' WWII general whom some believe was responsible for the 1945 Labour election landslide!

Meantime, our British Battles series, still wading deep in controversy, has arrived at the beaches of Dunkirk in May 1940...

Neil Faulkner

Let us know what you think...

We would love to hear your opinions on this issue of the magazine. What are your favourite bits? What should we cover next issue? You can give us your feedback:

✉ By Post:

Military History Monthly
Lamb House
Church Street
London W4 2PD

☎ By Phone:

020 8819 5580

@ By Email:

feedback@
military-history.org

🌐 Online:

www.military-history.org

📘 On Facebook:

Military History
Monthly Magazine

Contents

FEATURED

16

America's Bloodiest Day

Antietam

Marking the release of Steven Spielberg's blockbuster *Lincoln*, *MHM* analyses the pivotal Battle of Antietam, 17 September 1862.

ON THE
COVER



28

History of the British Army

Dunkirk, 28 May-4 June 1940

Despite being fought with gritty determination, Dunkirk was one of the greatest defeats in British imperial history. *MHM* assesses the battle.



42

The Lords of War

An interview with Correlli Barnett

Military History Monthly editor Neil Faulkner speaks to Correlli Barnett about his long career as a military historian and his new book *The Lords of War*.



50

Otto the Great

The Battle of Lechfeld and the First German Reich

Jack Watkins recalls the great early Medieval ruler in whose footsteps Bismarck and Hitler would march.



58

Plumbers in the cookhouse

Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army, 1941-1946

Roger Broad discovers that one of the most influential British generals of World War II was more political radical than great commander.



April 2013

MILITARY
HISTORY
MONTHLY

Military History Monthly

Issue 31, April 2013

www.military-history.org

EVERY ISSUE



Dispatches

Welcome	3
News	6
Opinion	8
Letters	10
Your Military History	12

Museums Guide

48

With so many museums to choose from, it is difficult to know which to visit. Here, *MHM* lends a hand with our pick of the best military history museums.

On Manoeuvres

Listings	66
----------	----

Military History Monthly's summary of the best events coming up this April.

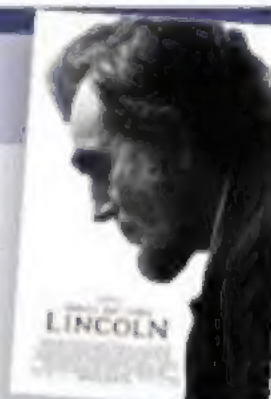
Museum	68
--------	----

Richard Lucas discovers an extraordinary museum devoted to contemporary conflict in the Middle East.

Reviews

Film	72
------	----

MHM editor Neil Faulkner reviews Steven Spielberg's new epic, *Lincoln*.



TV	73
----	----

The best films and documentaries on the Military History channel this April.

Books	74
-------	----

Julian Thompson reviews Hugh Bicheno's *Elizabeth's Sea Dogs: how the English became the scourge of the seas* for our lead review this month, while Jules Stewart is fascinated by the revealing *Tales from the Special Forces Club* by Sean Rayment.



Regulars

War on Film	38
-------------	----

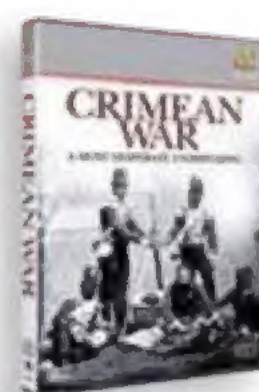
Continuing our regular series, TV producer and historian Taylor Downing reviews wartime Spitfire classic *The First of the Few*.

Drawing Board	82
---------------	----

Daniel Sager looks at the shortcomings of the German *Biber* submarine.

MHM Quiz	80
----------	----

This month we have five copies of new DVD *Crimean War: a most desperate undertaking* to be won. Enter the *MHM* Quiz to be in with a chance of winning.



EDITORIAL

Editor: Neil Faulkner
neil@military-history.org

Assistant Editor: George Clode
george@military-history.org

Editor-at-large: Andrew Selkirk
andrew@military-history.org

Sub Editor: Simon Coppock

Art Editor: Mark Edwards
mark@currentpublishing.com

Designer: Justine Middleton
justine@currentpublishing.com

Managing Director: Rob Selkirk

Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Tel: 020 8819 5580

COMMERCIAL

Advertising Sales Manager: Mike Traylen
T: 020 8819 5360 E: mike@currentpublishing.com

Advertising Sales: Grace Biggins
T: 020 8819 5361 E: grace@currentpublishing.com

Marketing Manager: Emma Watts-Plumpkin
T: 020 8819 5575 E: emma@currentpublishing.com

Production Manager: Maria Earle
T: 020 8819 5587 E: maria@currentpublishing.com

Commercial Director: Libby Selkirk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK: £36.95 (12 issues) **RoW:** £46.95 (12 issues)
Back issues: £4.50 each / £5.50 non-UK (inc p&p)
Binders: (hold 12 copies) £15 / £20
Slip Cases: (hold 12 copies) £15 / £20

Military History Monthly Subscriptions

Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Tel: 020 8819 5580 Fax: 020 8819 5589
subs@military-history.org
www.military-history.org/subscriptions

NEWS DISTRIBUTION

UK & Rest of World: COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, UB7 7QE Tel: 01895 444 055

Printed in England by William Gibbons

Military History Monthly (ISSN 2048-4100) is published monthly by Church Street Publishing Ltd, Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD

© Church Street Publishing Ltd 2013

All rights reserved. Text and pictures are copyright restricted and must not be reproduced without permission of the publishers. The publishers, editors and authors accept no responsibility in respect of any goods or services which may be advertised or referred to in this magazine. Every effort has been made to secure permission for copyright material. In the event of any material being used inadvertently or where it has been impossible to contact the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue. All liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or damaged caused by reliance on the information contained within this publication is hereby excluded. The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher.



Military History Monthly has been commended by the Media Pioneer Awards. For more information visit: www.thespecialistmediashow.com

DISPATCHES



Our round-up of this month's military history news stories.



REIGATE FORT REVEALED

Some of Surrey's leading conservation organisations are working together to reveal the lesser-known military history of Reigate Fort. Funding has been granted to the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Board, which is working with the National Trust, Gatton Trust, the Surrey Youth Support Service, and Surrey County Archaeological Unit to devise an exciting programme of educational and research events for local communities to take part in.

The project, called Front Line Surrey Hills, will run over the next two years and include fort garrison days, living history events, and a series of walks and talks. Gatton Community Theatre will be staging an open-air theatre production in the grounds of Reigate Fort, and Surrey County Archaeological Unit will investigate mysterious structures there, presumed to date from the Second World War, as well as uncovering more evidence of 'Monty's secret bunker'.

The National Trust's ranger for Reigate Fort, Marc Russell, commented, 'the history of Reigate Fort is so fascinating. I can't wait



to share its stories and uncover more of its secrets with our local communities. It's a great opportunity to learn more about your local area, meet new people, and get involved in such an unusual project.'

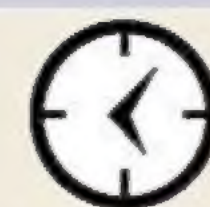
If you would like to participate, there are lots of ways to do so: volunteers are needed for all aspects of the project. No prior experience is necessary, just a willingness and interest. Roles vary from explainers, fort guides, archaeological assistants, actors, backstage theatre assistants, and historical researchers.

The military history of Reigate Fort spans the First and Second World Wars, and in the

last few years the National Trust has reopened the fort to visitors. Used as a mobilisation centre and built in 1898, the fort was used to store munitions and equipment, and formed part of a line of defences stretching along the North Downs.

That 72-mile defence-line along the Downs was built to protect London when a huge ship-building programme was initiated by the government. The southern line was divided into ten sectors, with Reigate Fort falling into 'Redhill Position', which was seven miles long.

For more details, visit the National Trust's website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Navy stories appeal

An appeal for untold stories of the Royal Navy's colonial forces has been launched by the National Museum of the Royal Navy for a new major exhibition, 'HMS – Hear My Story', which is due to open in spring 2014 in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

One of the rare stories already discovered is that of Leading Seaman Mohammed Rahim, who was awarded the Distinguished Services Medal (DSM) for Bravery during WWII for risking his life to save a wounded seaman in a night-time secret operations raid.

Leading Seaman Rahim received his DSM 'for gallantry going to the rescue of a wounded seaman, regardless of heavy fire'. He received serious wounds on 10 February 1944, when, at night, he was steering a small motor-launch from Chittagong (in modern-day Bangladesh) down the coast of Burma to pick up a Secret Operations Executive agent. In a close-quarters encounter with Japanese forces, he was wounded. Rahim was strongly recommended for an award; three other Indian crewmen were also injured and one died, but they received no official recognition.

Matthew Sheldon, HMS Project Director at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, said: 'The Royal Indian Navy existed from 1934 to 1950. At its height, 28,000 men served, usually in unglamorous small ships. They suffered over 1,000 fatalities, with many



others wounded. However, very little has been recorded about the lives and contributions of these and other colonial forces of the Royal Navy.'

Rahim was the recipient of one of only 23 DSMs awarded to Royal Indian Navy personnel during the war, all for operations off Burma in the period 1942 to 1945.

'Our new exhibition "HMS" will tell the undiscovered stories from the ordinary men, women, and ships which have made the Navy's amazing history over the last 100 years. This story will not be complete without knowing more about the naval volunteer forces from the Caribbean to the Straits of Singapore.'



WILDCATS MAKE HISTORY

Race2Recovery, the group of predominantly injured soldiers who formed

a rally team to raise funds for Forces charities, recently made history by becoming the first ever disability team to complete the world's toughest race – the Dakar Rally.

The team's Land Rover Defender-based Wildcat race vehicle and its crew – driver Major Matt O'Hare and co-driver Corporal Phillip Gillespie – completed their sensational achievement when they crossed the finish line of the final stage in Santiago, Chile.

It signalled the end of an extraordinary two weeks of racing that saw the team's other three Wildcat vehicles fall out of the race at various stages along the way.



EVOLUTION OF THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS

The Royal Air Force Museum London is pleased to announce that it has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to redevelop the

exhibitions within the historic Graham White Factory building. This will showcase the museum's unique First World War collections to mark the centenary of the conflict in 2014. The initial support of £74,500 will enable the museum to make progress with their plan to obtain a full HLF grant of £706,300.

The new exhibition will use the world-class collection of planes, letters, film, and photographs to help people understand what it was like to be involved in the earliest days of the Royal Flying Corps, and how our world was changed by technology and innovation during the war.



NAVY RECORDS ONLINE

A new online publishing site has been launched by the Navy Records Society, providing

a vast resource of significant British naval records for naval scholars, students, and enthusiasts. The registered charity, which has been publishing in print since 1893, has now embraced the internet. Members can share their knowledge and comment on every posting.

The charity aims to expand its members' knowledge and preserve and share its naval heritage. Members are wholeheartedly encouraged to become involved in this continuous process of research and discovery. For more information, visit: www.navyrecordsonline.co.uk

LIONS AND DONKEYS? NOT AT THE SOMME!

In February, we led with a feature on the Somme. **James Brett** takes issue with our interpretation.



After my pleasant surprise at your refreshingly 'revisionist' editorial, I was disappointed with the lead article in the February issue concerning the Somme. An opportunity to reinvestigate the generally misunderstood Great War seems to have been missed. Instead we had the traditional view of 'lions led by donkeys', with countless innocents sent to the slaughter by callous red-tabs sipping port in their lavish *châteaux*. There were the habitual rogue photographs captioned 'a British officer leads his men over the top at the Somme on 1 July 1916', which were, in fact, a pair of stills taken from a newsreel staged several weeks later for the benefit of the cameras.

Methods of attack

More disturbing was the perpetuation of the myth of 'men walking upright across no-man's land' due to the orders of 'those ensconced in comfortable *châteaux* far behind the line'. Study Haig and Rawlinson's official orders prior to the battle and there is no mention made of this mode of advance. Instead, it was largely down to the corps and divisional commanders to determine the most appropriate way of crossing no-man's-land in each sector. Haig and Rawlinson gave their commanders the freedom to experiment with various solutions to the unique tactical problems they faced.

Admittedly some did employ linear lines on the morning of 1 July, such as Pulteney's III Corps, but this was by no

means generic. Hunter-Weston's VIII Corps crept out into no-man's-land under cover of darkness and was able to pounce on the German frontline troops within seconds of the barrage lifting. Congreve's XIII Corps, on the right of the British line, abandoned their heavy packs and doubled across no-man's-land in platoon files, making effective use of dead ground. Indeed, 30 Division only fell short of their objective due to the necessity of securing their flanks against the slow progress of the corps to their left.

Similarly, Rawlinson did not enforce a uniform artillery plan, and in some sectors the BEF's gunnery was far from 'ineffective'. Maxse's 18th Division utilised a creeping barrage starting in front of their own trenches and providing his infantry with invaluable cover, allowing them to reach all of their objectives with relatively light casualties. This success was noted by the high command and before the close of the battle several other divisions had experimented with this methodology.

The notion that the BEF's commanders were disconnected from the realities of industrial warfare is largely incorrect. Haig's diary shows that he spent most afternoons touring units under his command, and while his time in frontline trenches was undoubtedly limited, he and his subordinates were well aware of the conditions their troops faced. Further, the term '*châteaux* generals' is misleading. Pulteney's HQ for III Corps comprised the shell-damaged kitchen of a French farmhouse, barely ten metres square. By

the close of 1916, 28 brigadier-generals had been killed in action.

Men and matériel

I accept, however, that it is easy to select specific examples to support a historian's viewpoint on almost any battle. Nevertheless, I felt that your article missed the principal lesson which the BEF learnt from its operation on the Somme – an oversight in a series which aims to trace the development of the British Army – namely that the army's logistical and administrative system was insufficient to maintain operations on the scale now demanded.

As with any modern industrialised conflict, the Great War was essentially about 'stuff'. Victory was often determined by the side that could bring the greatest weight of men and *matériel* to bear on a vital point at the critical time. As your article correctly recognised, the conundrum of the 1914-1918 battlefield was that the defender could move men and *matériel* into the battle at a far greater pace than the attacker – thus the debate surrounding 'bite-and-hold' or 'breakthrough'.

At the Somme, Germany could rely upon all the technology of the 20th century – steam, internal combustion, the telephone – to transport and organise their armies in the field. On the opposite side, the BEF and the French had to rely upon the centuries-old transport of horse and foot to convey their reserves, artillery, and supplies across a zone devastated of all infrastructure. Communications largely relied upon the pace of the runner.

Faced with this technological enigma, it is easy to conclude that Haig should have abandoned any notion of a grand breakthrough offensive, and that not to do so was an egotistical folly. But the reality was he was given little choice. For the leaders of France and Britain, so long as German troops occupied a vast swathe of France's rich industrial heartland, a strategy of restricted attacks that guaranteed a protracted conflict was unacceptable both to the politicians and general public. Pride and French sovereignty were at stake: the BEF's job was to expel the invader as soon as possible. When Haig and Robertson addressed the war cabinet in January 1916

with a proposal for only limited offensives that year, they were angrily shouted down by cabinet members.

Lack of munitions

Not only were unrealistic demands made of the BEF leadership; they also lacked the tools to accomplish the job. It was not until the late spring of 1917 that sufficient quantities of heavy artillery, munitions, and general supplies were available for the BEF's commanders to sustain effective offensive action on the scale demanded.

The pre-war Army's only munitions source was Woolwich, and this was an arsenal rather than a factory, with shell manufacture effectively a cottage industry. At Neuve Chapelle, in March 1915, Rawlinson's IV Corps used a hurricane bombardment to achieve an impressive first-day lodgement. But his artillery was concentrated on a front barely two miles wide, and he expended his corps' entire munitions quota for the next six months.

War production was rapidly stepped up, but this created issues with quality. At Loos almost 60% of the shells fired failed to explode. The 'shell crisis' of 1915, as the Territorials were effectively sacrificed due to a lack of supplies, brought about the fall of Asquith's government. Only by 1916 were British manufacturers producing something near the quantity of *matériel* required.

Still, the broadening of the front to be attacked on the Somme spread the BEF's artillery too thin. While both Haig and Rawlinson agreed with their artillery advisors, Birch and Uniacke, that a hurricane bombardment was the most effective method of breaking the German trench-line, they lacked sufficient quantities of heavy artillery to achieve this. In order to drop the same poundage of shells per yard of trench as at Neuve Chapelle, they were forced to adopt a long bombardment. The rapid expansion of the BEF also meant that the quality of the new gunners was variable. The bombardment therefore lacked the concentration and accuracy of 12 months later.

The legacy of the Somme

The Somme's true legacy was not in the field of strategy and tactics, but logistics and administration. Your article accurately describes the sheer scale of *matériel* amassed prior to the Somme, by far the largest operation yet conducted by the BEF. However, the General Staffs A and Q Branches, which dealt with logistics and administration, were still operating along the principles of the pre-war Field Service Regulations.

During the summer of 1916, war production ceased to be a problem, but the BEF's administration found itself unable to cope with the sheer scale of the offensive. The inefficient system all but ground to a halt as conditions on forward supply-lines worsened and demand increased, an unending downwards spiral. One of the principal reasons subsequent attacks on the Somme failed to restart the advance was that the logistical organisation was unable to supply the engaged divisions with the resources required to achieve local superiority.

The administrative failings at the Somme were well recognised by both Haig and Lloyd George. It is no coincidence that shortly after the offensive's conclusion Eric Geddes, former managing-director of the LMS railway, was appointed as Director-General of Transportation, his mission to overhaul completely the BEF's administrative system. His sole remit was efficiency.

Two of the most important changes made were a streamlining of the BEF's port systems, greatly increasing the tonnage passing through Dunkirk, Boulogne, and Le Havre, and greater British operational control over the French Nord Railway system, upon which the BEF was largely reliant for its supplies.

In the two months prior to the Somme, the controllers of the Nord system had prioritised French movements, rationing the BEF to 150,000 tons per week and causing a huge backlog at the Channel ports. Geddes also reformed the forward supply system, investing heavily in road maintenance and motor transport, as well as hugely expanding the BEF's use of narrow-gauge railways, which were suited to the often difficult ground conditions of the Western Front. In January 1917 the War Department Light Railways operated 97 miles of track and conveyed a weekly average of 10,325 tons. By September 1917 they operated 623 miles and transported a weekly average of

210,808 tons; more than the entire standard-gauge network in June 1916.

1917

This enormous logistical reform and the effect it had on the BEF's operational capabilities were to be the true legacy of the Somme. By the late spring of 1917, Britain's generals could begin to operate without the supply restriction which had plagued almost all of their offensives thus far. For the first time they were free to experiment with *matériel*-based solutions to the tactical obstacles they faced.

This freedom ultimately bred innovation and success, first with the spectacular capture of Vimy Ridge by Julian Byng's Canadian Corps, and later with the impressive advance of Third Army at Cambrai. Both successes depended upon diligent logistical preparation of the immediate battlefield.

Yes, the BEF's leadership made mistakes at the Somme. Yes, thousands of men died in terrible conditions for very little gain. But to dismiss the offensive as an incompetent and pointless sacrifice is short-sighted.

The Somme was an important stepping stone on the BEF's learning curve as it grew from a tiny colonial police force into a mass industrialised army – an army that was ultimately capable of utilising its *matériel*-intense operational methodology to outfight the German Army on the Western Front during the second half of 1918. This evolution, which took less than four years, seems hardly reflective of a leadership which was 'incompetent, callous, and stupid'.

Archibald Wavell once said, 'It is knowledge of the mechanics of war, not of the principles of strategy, that distinguishes a good leader from a bad one.' I believe this to be equally true of the military historian. I look forward to reading your accounts of the next phase in the development of the British Army. 🇬🇧



HAVE YOUR SAY



Send your thoughts on issues raised in *Military History Monthly* to:

Post: *Military History Monthly*,
Lamb House, Church Street, London, W4 2PD
Email: feedback@military-history.org



AFGHANISTAN: LIES, DAMNED LIES, AND STATISTICS

Your editorial on the 'agony' of Afghanistan paints a negative picture that is not supported by historical or current facts. Statistics are a minefield to be used at one's peril. You say life expectancy has fallen to 43 years since 2003, but World Health Organisation statistics show it to have risen to nearly 50 in this period. You further claim that infant mortality has increased to 135 per 1,000 births, which is at variance with UNICEF, which puts the figure at 70, down from 150 in 2000.

These numbers are no cause for celebration, but things are not so dire as you claim, thanks in no small measure to the spread of health clinics, which have increased from 450 to 1,800 in the past decade.

In the First Anglo-Afghan War, the massacre of an army on the retreat from Kabul in 1842 doubtless ranks as a military catastrophe. But in that same year a British army returned to inflict a resounding defeat on the Afghans, and marched out with its honour redeemed. The 1838 invasion was not Britain's proudest moment, having been launched on the basis of lies and misinformation about a perceived Russian threat to India's security. Nevertheless, it is simply wrong to imply that Britain lost this war.

By 1878 the geopolitical picture had undergone a radical change. In the early 19th century the Russian and British empires were 2,000 miles apart. By the end of that century they were separated by 20 miles. A Russian 'diplomatic' mission had bullied its way into Kabul, and it is not realistic to think that Britain might simply have accepted this state of affairs.

Yes, Maiwand was a débâcle, but it was avenged in full, and far from losing this war, Britain concluded a peace treaty giving it full control over Afghan foreign policy.

In 2001 the US and its NATO allies went in under a UN mandate to liberate a people who in their vast majority detested the vicious Taliban regime. Today, after more than a decade of warfare, more than 80% still do not want them back. If we cut and run now, as your editorial appears to advocate, it would be a betrayal of these people, to whom we have promised so much.

It would make a laughing stock of NATO and send a dangerous signal to insurgents and terrorists that the West has no stomach to see the job through. In terms of simple self-interest, it would open the door to a takeover by fanatical extremists in Kabul, raising the spectre of Afghanistan once again becoming a training-ground for international terrorism.

In the relatively short time remaining prior to the withdrawal of Western combat troops, and with the military having at last taken on board the lessons of history and understood the people's wants and needs, we need to provide for a handover to a well-trained and -officered Afghan National Army. We also need to negotiate with moderate Pashtun Taliban elements, who in coalition with other ethnic groups, and in a regional context, can create the framework for national security and sustainable economic and political progress.

Jules Stewart
London



MOLTKE AND THE TEMPLATE OF GERMAN POWER

Although I missed the issue, I was very interested to see that *Military History* had run a piece on Helmuth von Moltke the Elder – arguably, after Napoleon, the greatest military genius of the 19th century. The Austro-Prussian War of 1866 is little known in this country; yet its consequences for Europe and the world were profound. Indeed, as far as I can see, there are only two substantial works on the subject in English, both excellent, by Geoffrey Wawro and Gordon A Craig respectively.

'Austro-Prussian War' is in itself something of a misnomer: the war also involved Italy, allied with Prussia – the newly unified nation attempting to flex its military muscle for the first time.

Italy invaded Austria from the south, Prussia from the north. Italy's first fumbling martial efforts were really quite hopeless and they were soundly defeated by the distinctly average Austrians at Custoza – ironically, however, as a result of Moltke's decisive victory in the north, the Italians were able to achieve most of their war aims. The Habsburg Empire had opposed Italian unification: therefore, had the Austrians triumphed, it is likely that Italy as a nation-state would have been throttled at birth.

Strategically and tactically, Moltke was well ahead of the European competition. Prussia's fit-for-purpose

railway network allowed him to transport three separate armies quickly to the Austrian border. Deployed on widely separated lines of invasion, they then concentrated on the battlefield and enveloped the badly commanded and strategically inert Austrian northern army.

Königgrätz, the war's culminating battle, represented, with some half a million combatants, the greatest military encounter in the history of the world to that point.

Austrian commander Benedek's dispositions would have been laughed out of soldier-school by any half-decent cadet. With both flanks in the air, Benedek arranged his forces in a huge arc in front of the River Elbe. His plan (such as it was) was not properly communicated to his commanders, nor was there any clear contingency in place for any retreat.

Yet Moltke's own grand scheme almost misfired: when his 1st and Elbe Armies attacked the Austrian line from the west and north-west on the morning of 3 July 1866, the Prussian

2nd Army was still hours away to the north-east. Prussian superiority in infantry tactics and weaponry (notably the Dreyse needle-gun) was largely offset by Austria's more modern artillery, which accounted for the majority of Prussian casualties during the campaign.

Despite all, by late morning, opportunity beckoned for Benedek. Prussian attacks had faltered and dislocated their centre. Benedek's commanders begged him to launch an attack that would probably have swept the Prussian 1st Army away.

For two hours Benedek dithered and tinkered, and the moment was lost. By mid-afternoon the Prussian 2nd Army was on the field in strength, Moltke had his double-envelopment, and the war itself was effectively over.

The Prussians had remedied their artillery deficiency by the time of their war with France in 1870. Impressive in 1866, the Prussian Army was a deadly serious proposition by 1870. The Unification of Germany followed the crushing of France, and the template

for German military power up to and including World War II had been set: speed in deployment; combined-arms operations; meticulous planning by a General Staff so powerful it was virtually a state within a state – a scenario which allowed Ludendorff to become *de facto* military dictator in the last year of the First World War.

Yet if Benedek had responded to the anguished pleas of his generals and launched his Austrians at the Prussian line at about midday on 3 July 1866, the Battle of Königgrätz would surely have been his – and the last 150 years of European history might have been very different.

Nick Toal
Essex



ONE-SIDED SOMME

Although I very much enjoyed reading your article on the Somme (February issue, *MHM* 29), I have to say that I found it somewhat one-sided. Yet again you presented the oft-repeated mantra about 'armchair generals' and I expected at every turn to find a comment about 'lions led by donkeys'.

I am not an apologist for Haig, but I have sympathies for the revisionist point of view which you clearly despise. As you point out, something had to be done to take the pressure off Verdun (at the insistence of the French). The Germans were content to sit tight in their luxurious redoubts, neutralise France, and eventually negotiate a settlement crystallising their ill-gotten territorial gains. No-one would deny that the only way to dislodge them was to go on the offensive; the question is, how and where.

With the benefit of hindsight it is easy to criticise decisions made at the time by commanders who had no experience of warfare of that magnitude. Of course there were bad generals, but there were also very good generals (Plumer, Birdwood, Currie, Maxse, Monash, Ingouville-Williams) and it is grossly unfair to condemn them all as 'armchair generals' who had no knowledge of the front-line conditions. Tell that to the six killed and nine wounded general officers from the battle. Besides, given the lack of effective communications – which you acknowledge – a corps or army commander would be completely vulnerable, ineffective, and *incommunicado* wandering around in front-line trenches. Yes, they commandeered *châteaux*, but what other large buildings were available in France to house their staffs?

Why did Haig not get sacked? He made horrendous mistakes, but even Lloyd George admitted that there was no-one else of his calibre to replace him. Judging by the many thousands of old soldiers who attended his funeral in 1928, he was clearly held in high esteem by his army.

Wars cannot be won without offensive action, and I am sure you would agree that there was no lack of offensive spirit in the BEF, however misguided it might have been on occasions. 'Necessary sacrifices'? Maybe, but at least the lessons learned resulted in the decisive victory of the '100 days' leading to the Armistice.

Roger Laing
Lt Col (Retd)

LOOS: A NECESSARY BATTLE

I am writing in response to your article on the Battle of Loos (January issue, *MHM* 28). While I enjoyed the article, I believe it failed to put the battle completely in perspective. It made no mention of the Central Powers' startling progress in late 1915 – pushing the Russians back 300 miles and almost completely out of Poland. The failure of the British authorities to commit their forces to a large-scale offensive on the Western Front to pin down German forces would have almost certainly seen the Russians knocked out of the war as early as 1916.

I was also disappointed by the underlying tone of the article – essentially 'lions led by donkeys'. Except for Field-Marshal French, it was largely the same officer caste that would lead Britain to victory by 1918. Many lessons were still to be learnt regarding trench warfare, most notably the importance of wire-cutting artillery, but it is all too easy to blame the failures of 1915 on ineffective leadership.

Jason Stewart
Ruislip

THE FORGOTTEN THEATRE

The human touch: stories of war and conflict from readers of *MHM*.

Meredith Graham is a freelance journalist, living in Colorado, with an interest in military history.



Meredith Graham looks through the scrapbook of her great-uncle, a professional photographer who served as a decoder in China during the Korean War.

In late 1943, Alvin M Sievers set sail from Los Angeles, California, *en route* to India and, ultimately, China. As a member of the 12th Air Service Group of the United States Army, his deployment during World War II would be different from those in Europe or the Pacific. In fact, military historians would go on to call what happened in the China-Burma-India campaign that Sievers was a part of, the ‘forgotten theatre’ of World War II.

Little has been written about the troops sent to aid the Chinese Army in its fight against the Japanese, about the relatively few men whose job it was to train Chinese soldiers and work alongside them to build airstrips and repair fighter jets. But their mission was nonetheless integral to the Allied plan and to China’s victory in its War of Resistance against Japan.

Family archive

When Sievers boarded the USS *Hermitage* one early November day, he had no idea where he was headed or what he would be doing. He kept a journal throughout his deployment, and his

Left In India, local labourers use elephants to pound the ground flat.

Above Alvin Sievers (second from right) with Chinese air cadets in Kunming, February 1944.

family kept all the letters he wrote to them. After he returned at the end of 1945, he compiled his letters and journal entries, plus newspaper clips, magazine articles, certificates, and the hundreds of photographs he took during his deployment.

A commercial photographer by trade, he had taken his camera with him. Wherever he went, he sought out the nearest shops for film and processing, though he also developed some himself using chemicals sent from home.

Along with the 1,200 members of his service group and some 5,000 others from the Navy, Marines, and Red Cross, Alvin Sievers endured a 46-day journey across the Pacific Ocean, during which the ship crossed the Equator, twice, and the International Date Line. The lower-ranked men, including Private First Class Sievers, slept in the ship’s hold, which had bunks stacked four high.

‘The heat in the hold of this ship where our bunks are is unbearable,’ Sievers wrote in his journal. ‘I don’t think I have perspired so much in my life. A short time on the open deck this afternoon gave me quite a sunburn.’

After a few short stops at Bora Bora and Australia, the men were handed booklets dispelling some of the mystery of their destination – they now knew they were headed to India. The ship stopped at Bombay on the day after Christmas, and a few days later a train met Sievers and the rest of the 12th Air Service Group at the dock. They spent the next three days heading to Kanchrapara, just outside Calcutta.

Transportation to theatre

This put Sievers right in the thick of the China-Burma-India theatre of World War II. As their booklets indicated, American and British military involvement in India at this time was aimed at keeping Japanese forces from seizing the country and taking over its strategically located ports. As well as defending India, the Allies wanted to reclaim Burma and reopen a route to get supplies into China.

Clockwise from top left Alvin Sievers gets a ride through Kunming in January 1944; a Japanese plane lands in Chihchiang carrying surrendering soldiers; Alvin Sievers (second from left) and other members of his service group.



In India, American and British troops faced the difficult task of transporting much-needed supplies from the docks to an airstrip in Assam, north-east of Bangladesh, a route that contained no passable road. An article in the June 1944 issue of *Air Force* magazine explained the situation:

'From the States, supplies pour into ships, and sail halfway around the world to be unloaded onto the heads of the frail coolies of India. Ports are jammed with United Nations cargo ships. Transshipment takes time, but there is no alternative. Gasoline drums are slung from the shoulders of four coolies when it must be moved uphill; otherwise the drums are rolled. Heavy equipment is moved by an electric hoist, one of the few to be found along rail lines.

'Transportation difficulties are the rule, not the exception, in the CBI theatre, and those encountered on the road to Assam are among the toughest.' The members of the 12th Air Service Group found themselves in much the same predicament as the aforementioned cargo – stationed in Assam awaiting transport to China.

'We went north by train and truck to Chabua in Assam Province,' Sievers wrote. 'There, after a long wait, we flew to China over the Himalaya Mountains, the highest in the world, and landed in Kunming. I think we flew at 17,500 feet.'

The Hump

The flight he referred to was called 'the Hump', the approximately 500-mile stretch of air between Assam and Kunming, China, that crossed over Burma and the Himalayas. After the infamous Burma Road – with its 23 switchbacks – was closed to Allied use, military personnel, cargo, and supplies had to be flown over the Hump to get into China.

'The Hump route from Assam to Yunnan is 500-miles long, and veteran flyers say that every mile is a gamble with death,' reported *Popular Mechanics* in its July 1944 issue. 'It gets its name from the subsidiary ranges of the Himalaya Mountains that extend into Burma, jagged snow-capped little brothers of Mount Everest that protrude into the clouds and mist at 18,000 feet.

'Between the peaks are valleys of lush jungle and treacherous air currents which cause a plane to drop a couple of thousand feet in a minute.'

By 1943, there were daily trips over the Hump. Cargo limits reached their maximum in July 1945 with more than 77,000 tonnes being transported into China in one month. But the success of getting much-needed supplies into China came at a hefty cost – more than 500 aircraft crashes were reported and at least 1,200 crew members were confirmed dead according to the CBI Hump Pilots Association.



In mid-February 1944, Sievers and his service group were sent over the Hump to Kunming. 'Except for the possibility of being bombed by the Japs, everything is fine here. In exchange for lend-lease from the United States, the Chinese feed and house American troops,' Sievers wrote upon his arrival. 'Even though it seems hard to believe, even though we don't have house maids, we do have four or five Chinese house boys in every barracks to keep "our barracks nice and clean". They are war orphans.'

The mission

In China, the main objective for the 12th Air Service Group was to assist the 14th Air Force. Members worked to repair planes, gather supplies, and serve alongside the Chinese Army, led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Their main objective was to keep the Japanese military busy, to ensure that they continued to divert men and resources there rather than to the Pacific, where the main American forces were engaged.

Sievers was not part of a combat group, and it was clear from his letters and from a published interview with his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert J Koshland, that the Americans were in China primarily to lend support to the Chinese troops.

The members of the 14th Air Force – previously known as 'the Flying Tigers' – did, however, engage Japanese forces directly, and they needed fuel, spare parts, and fresh ammo. All of these supplies had to be first flown over the Hump.

Sievers was tasked with encoding and decoding classified information as a message-centre clerk. He kept files of each transmission, including its time and mode of delivery. But, perhaps because of the classified nature of his job, he wrote little about his duties, preferring instead to tell his family about his many encounters with Chinese soldiers and civilians ▶

YOUR MILITARY HISTORY



From left to right In China, local labourers use handmade scales to weigh rock that they then carry on their shoulders to where it's needed to pave the roads; a Chinese labourer carries a load over a bridge; Alvin Sievers gets his hair cut by a Chinese barber outdoors in Luliang, China.

and his observations about life in China. One such encounter was an afternoon visit to a local school, where he was invited to play English teacher to about 40 young boys.

'Instead of me reading, I got them to read, and then I corrected their pronunciation, which was very poor,' he wrote. 'Every time I said something or made a correction, the whole class repeated what I said. They were able to duplicate every sound. The subject of the lesson was Christopher Columbus. Surprisingly, as bad as their pronunciation was, they understood everything they read. I asked questions and they were able to answer them.'

Chinese 'coolies'

The first year Sievers spent in China was not an easy one for American forces there. They were expected to work alongside the Chinese soldiers, whose uniforms and equipment were often sub-par. The local labour force, relied upon to build airstrips and the like, included great numbers but utilised rudimentary tools, often using elephants to pound the ground flat. They used handmade scales to weigh rocks, which were then carried on the shoulders of 'coolies' – the word at the time for local labourers – to where they were needed. Then men would roll large, round boulders over the ground, crushing the rock and smoothing the road.

During the first few months of 1944, Sievers was stationed in Kunming, and then Kweilin, further east. He experienced air raids, including one he wrote about on 9 April 1944: 'We heard the sound of airplane motors overhead. "Those aren't our planes," someone said. And they weren't. They were Jap planes headed in the direction of our field. It's a funny feeling to watch the enemy fly over your head and not be able to do anything about it except hope he doesn't drop a bomb on you.'

When the Japanese took Kweilin in July 1944, the base was evacuated and, as with several other American bases, the 14th Air Force was forced to bomb its own airfields. Sievers was then sent from one base to another, narrowly missing another attack by the Japanese. By Christmas 1944, he was in Chihchiang, in Hunan province. He would stay there until the end of the war.

Shortly after ringing in the New Year, Japanese forces again closed in on the American base where Sievers, along with the 12th Air Service Group and the 14th Air Force, were headquartered. In a massive effort to fight them off, American pilots flew two entire divisions of the Chinese 6th Army over



the Hump to Chihchiang. They brought with them supplies and pack animals, including mules and horses. Sievers was there when the troops and animals were unloaded. The plan was a success.

'The Japs never did get here,' Sievers wrote. 'Instead, the Chinese pushed them back to where they started from.'

Victory

This was a huge victory for the Chinese Army and the American troops there. Sievers saved one newspaper article from 18 May 1945 that reported: 'Chinese ground forces, working in very close coordination with the hard-hitting 14th Air Force, have administered a defeat to the Japanese attackers, and have probably thwarted, at least for the time being, what once looked like a very dangerous and imminent Japanese threat to the 14th Air Force base at Chihchiang.'

After that, things got calmer in the CBI theatre. News of Germany's surrender spread quickly, and by 21 August, a few weeks after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was Japan's turn.

'Today for the first time I saw the enemy in the flesh,' Sievers recalled on the day of Japan's surrender in China. 'Today, for the first time, I saw a Jap plane without running for a slit trench. The occasion was the surrender of the Jap forces in China.'

Several months later, the Army started calling troops back home. Sievers got on board a ship in Shanghai mid-November and was back with his family in St Louis, Missouri, by Christmas.

America's involvement in China during World War II was mostly considered a success. The military had found a way to feed supplies and manpower into China by flying over the Hump. It helped train the Chinese soldiers of Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, and it diverted Japanese personnel and resources away from the Pacific. It also resulted in the Japanese retreating from China, once again opening up land and sea access to China. But US involvement could not prevent a resumption of civil war and eventual Communist victory in 1949.

To the rest of the world, which was focused on Europe and the Pacific arena, the China-Burma-India campaigns to which Sievers and thousands of others devoted their service – and some their lives – remained largely unknown. ■

CAMBRIDGE

"DAVID STAHEL IS FAST BECOMING A HOUSEHOLD NAME"

JOURNAL OF MILITARY HISTORY

Cambridge presents

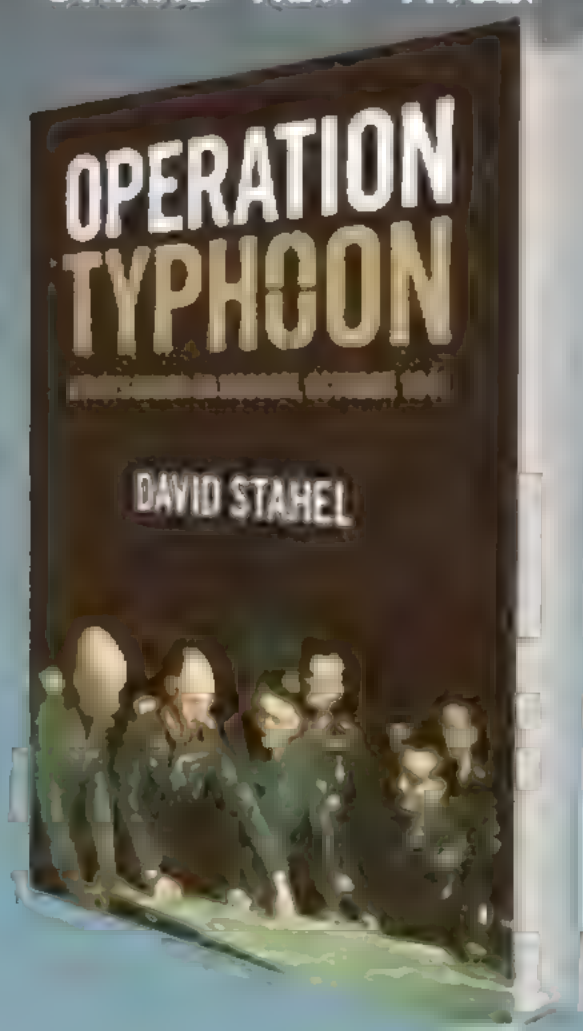
DAVID STAHEL

BRAND NEW TITLE!

"A THRILLING BOOK THAT NO MILITARY HISTORIAN CAN AFFORD TO IGNORE"
HISTORIC MILITARY



OPERATION BARBAROSSA
NOW IN PAPERBACK!



"STAHEL IS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A
CONTROVERSIAL AND STIMULATING BOOK"
MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY



KIEV 1941
NOW IN PAPERBACK!

Go to: www.cambridge.org/stahel
for exclusive videos and more.



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Make Sure You Have The Right Cover

ADRIAN FLUX is the leading UK specialist in the restoration and repair of military vehicles. We have a team of experienced technicians who can restore your vehicle to its original condition or provide a full restoration service. We can also provide a full range of accessories and parts for your vehicle.



ADRIAN
FLUX

0800 081 8989
adrianflux.co.uk

ADRIAN FLUX IS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

Insurance for Military Vehicles



Our Military Vehicle Insurance includes:

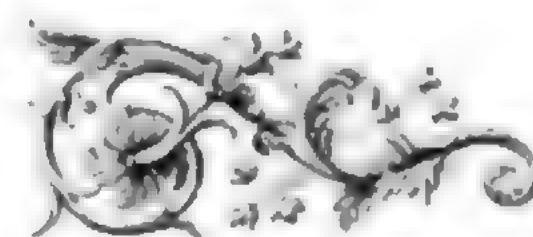
- FREE Legal Cover
- Unlimited Mileage
- Club Discounts
- Q-plates

- Agreed Value
- Modification Cover
- Collections Cover
- Rally and Event Cover

AMERICA'S BLOODIEST DAY



ANTIETAM



On 17 September 1862, amid the farms and fields of the Maryland backcountry, 110,000 men fought a pitched battle of unprecedented ferocity to decide the future of America. Marking the release of Steven Spielberg's new blockbuster *Lincoln*, we analyse this pivotal moment in US history.

Gettsyburg is more famous, but Antietam, in the view of many historians, was the true turning-point in the American Civil War. A narrow Union victory provided the opportunity for Lincoln to radicalise the war. The effect was to rule out compromise, to ensure it would be a war to the bitter end, and to rally the forces necessary to achieve such a decisive victory. Antietam allowed Lincoln to turn the war to save the Union into a war to free the slaves. A 'cabinet war' about states' rights became a 'people's war' to decide what sort of society America was to be.

More Americans were killed and wounded on 17 September 1862 than on any other day in history. Twice as many died that day as on 9/11. Four times as many were killed or wounded as on D-Day. Around 6,500 were killed on the day itself, another 15,000 or so were wounded, and many of these latter either died later or were crippled for life.

A deadly battleground

That it was so bloody is in large part due to the shape and size of the battlefield. The armies met in a few square miles of ground squeezed between the Potomac River and Antietam Creek. The ground enclosed was 'complex terrain' – much of it was gently rolling, creating areas of dead ground; it was cluttered with woods, farm buildings, fields of ripening corn, and the small town of Sharpsburg (which gave the battle its Confederate name);

and it was criss-crossed with old lanes, stone walls, and split-rail fences, along with Antietam Creek itself.

Confederate General Robert E Lee, in command of the Army of Northern Virginia, heavily outnumbered and forced to fight a gruelling defensive battle, had no room to manoeuvre or retreat. His flanks were anchored on the river and the creek, and the river at his back left him no space to withdraw into if his army should be

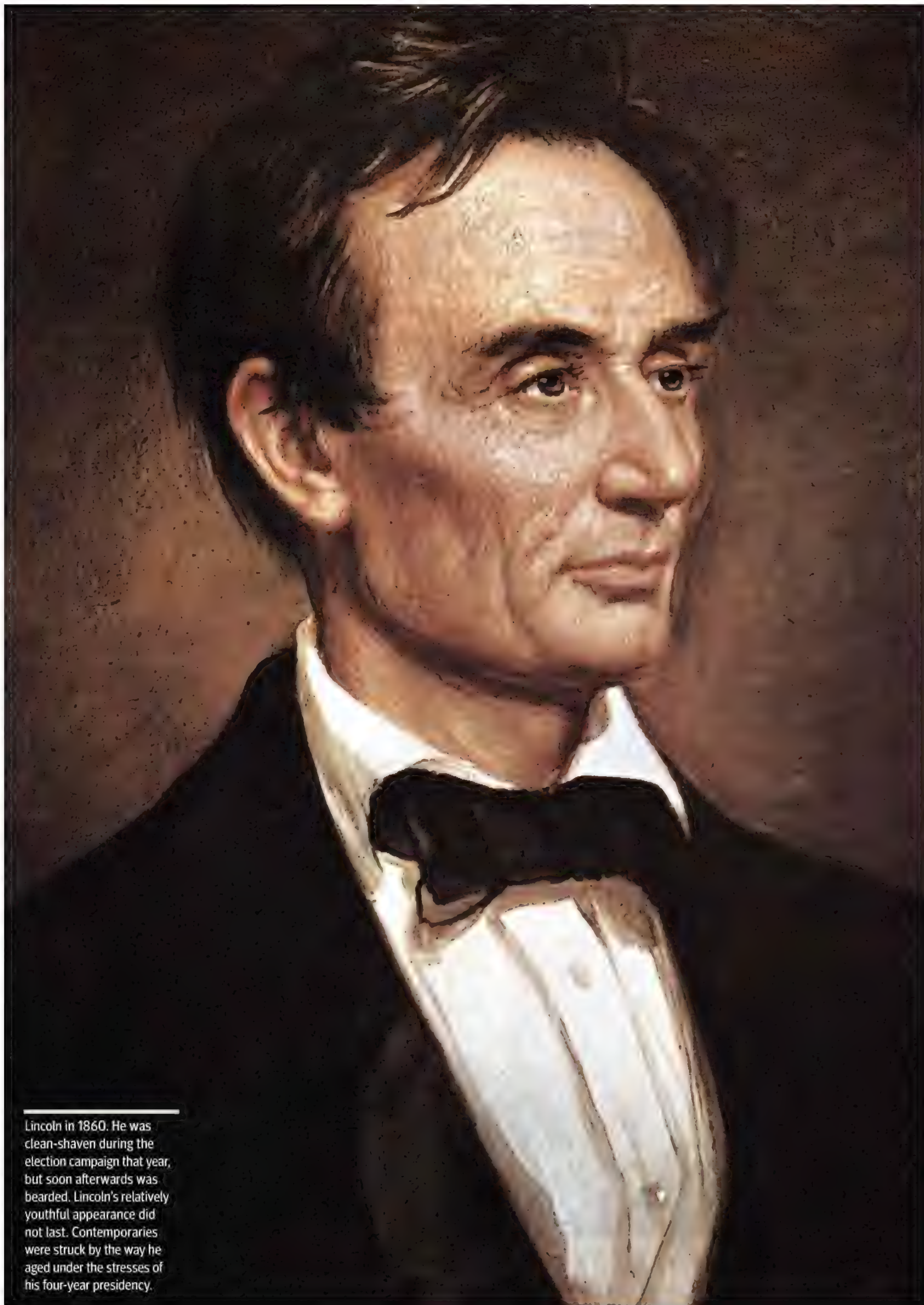
prized from its position on the ridge running either side of Sharpsburg.

Union General George B McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, was equally constrained. If the aim was to throw the invader out of Maryland, he had to attack. And if he was to attack, there was nothing for it but frontal assault on the Rebel line: no open flanks he might turn, no easy access into the enemy rear.

So 110,000 men and 450 cannon were packed into a stretch of farmland around ►

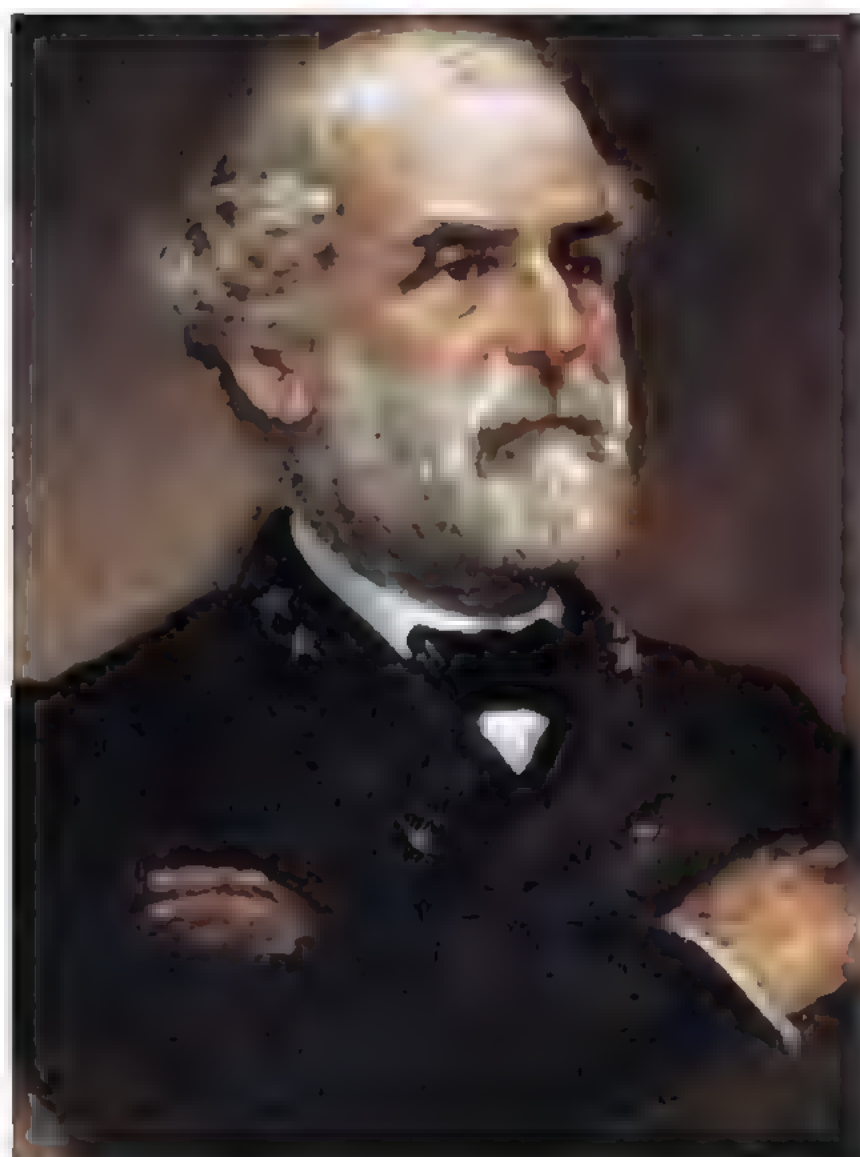
Below One of Andrew Gardner's famous photos of the Confederate dead in the Sunken Lane on the battlefield of Antietam. The battle – fought amid the woods, orchards, and cornfields of backcountry Maryland – was the bloodiest single day in American history. A narrow Union victory, in that the bloodletting was so severe that it forced the heavily outnumbered Confederate army to abandon its invasion of the North, it gave President Abraham Lincoln the opportunity to issue his Emancipation Proclamation freeing Southern slaves.





Lincoln in 1860. He was clean-shaven during the election campaign that year, but soon afterwards was bearded. Lincoln's relatively youthful appearance did not last. Contemporaries were struck by the way he aged under the stresses of his four-year presidency.

ANTIETAM



General Robert E Lee (1807-1870), commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. A general of exceptional boldness and tactical flair, Lee did more than any other man to keep the Confederate cause alive during his three years at the head of his country's main field army.

five miles long and three miles wide, with no option but to slug it out head-to-head. So Antietam – like the war as a whole – turned into a terrible battle of attrition. What decided it was the simple fact that Lee's 35,000 men were down to just 25,000 effectives by the end of the day, and those still on their feet were all fought-out; whereas McClellan's 75,000, though reduced by 13,000 casualties, still had 20,000 men in reserve who had played no part in the battle, plus another

13,000 who had reached the battlefield in the meantime, such that McClellan's reserves of fresh troops exceeded Lee's entire remaining strength on the morning of 18 September.

Nonetheless – and against the advice of all his senior commanders – Lee remained in position that following day, daring his opponent to renew the onslaught. McClellan did nothing. Ever over-estimating Rebel strength, he imagined Lee to have 125,000 men at Sharpsburg – a staggering five-fold exaggeration of his opponent's effective strength on 18 September.

A Democrat general

Lee could brazen a moral victory by standing his ground for a day. But his offensive power was exhausted and retreat to Virginia to resupply, refit, and reinforce his ragged, bleeding army unavoidable.

Lincoln had hoped to see the Army of Northern Virginia destroyed. He badgered McClellan to be more aggressive, to seize the moment, to recognise the opportunity for a crushing, war-winning triumph.

It was not to be. McClellan, now as always, had what Lincoln called 'the slows'. He likened supplying him with reinforcements to shovelling fleas across a barnyard: few seemed to get there, for, however many were dispatched, the enemy was always reported stronger.

Nor could he get McClellan to launch an invasion of Virginia



General George B McClellan (1826-1885), commander of the Army of the Potomac. A superb organiser and motivator of men, McClellan was hopelessly timid and lethargic in the face of the enemy; Lincoln said that he suffered from 'the slows'.

before Lee had rebuilt his army and its defences. McClellan sent one excuse after another for not immediately going onto the offensive against the diminished and demoralised Rebel army. Eventually Lincoln's patience snapped. On being told that the state of the Army of Potomac's horses was an impediment to an advance, the President replied: 'I have just read your despatches about sore-tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the Battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?'

McClellan was finally sacked on 7 November 1862. His sympathy with the South, his reluctance to wage all-out war, his opposition to making slavery an issue in the war – his soft Democratic politics in short – had found their military expression in his consistent lack of aggression in the conduct of operations. McClellan symbolised the first phase of the war – amateurish, muddleheaded, half-hearted. It was one of history's ironies that the victor of Antietam was brought down by the radicalisation of the war that his own victory had made possible.

Lee's invasion of Maryland

The war that many had thought would be quick and easy – as they so often do – turned out mean and hard. After a bad start in the summer of 1861, the Union had found itself on a roll in the first

Below Jackson's men crossing the Potomac to begin the invasion of Maryland.



Right The Antietam Campaign. Lee's invasion of Maryland in September 1862 was designed to draw the main Union army from the security of its entrenchments around Washington so that it could be defeated in open battle. To this end, he moved north-west of the capital and then divided his army into three, sending Jackson's men to seize the Harpers Ferry arsenal, and Longstreet's to take the rail terminal at Hagerstown, with the rest to provide a screening force at the two main passes through the South Mountain range. He was undone by an accident: the recovery of a full set of his orders in a deserted Confederate camp by a Union soldier.

Antietam allowed Lincoln to turn the war to save the Union into a war to free the slaves.

half of 1862, the climax an advance up the peninsula formed by the James and York Rivers that had brought McClellan's army to within ten miles or so of the Confederate capital at Richmond.

But then McClellan had stuck fast and done nothing, as was his way, convinced he was too hopelessly outnumbered to take the offensive further, instead sending a string of telegrams demanding reinforcement and resupply, and when they were forthcoming, demanding more.

Between 25 June and 1 July, the Confederates had launched a devastating counterattack, one made more devastating by the fact that their army before Richmond had a new commander, Robert E Lee, assisted by a dynamic partner, Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson; whereas McClellan simply went to pieces as his lines were battered by a succession of furious Rebel attacks. The Union army was bundled back down the Peninsula and was eventually evacuated.

Lee immediately swivelled his army and launched it northwards against John Pope's Army of Virginia, aiming to smash it before McClellan could get his army back from the Peninsula and open the way to an invasion of the North. The result was the two-day Battle of Second Manassas (or Bull Run) on 29-30 August. It did the job well enough, and Lee moved again, this time sending his army across the Potomac in a wide advance to the north-west of the Union capital.



Lee's gamble

Sometimes commentators imply that the North was bound to win the Civil War in the end. It had four times the white manpower and ten times the industrial capacity of the South. But this balance of force has to be related to the mission, and when this is done, things look far more even.

The South had seceded from the Union and could win the war simply by continuing to exist as an independent state in control of its territory. The North, by contrast, in order to restore the Union, was obliged to invade the South, defeat its armies, occupy its territory, and destroy its government. It would have to do this in a new continent vast in size, still with great tracts of wilderness, and where all military movement tended to be funnelled along rivers, railroads, and turnpikes provided with a succession of strong blocking positions.

None of this proved easy. And the effort required tested to the limit the endurance of the Northern people. Lincoln knew that morale, public opinion, and the will to win would be decisive in a long war. A Clausewitzian understanding of the conflict grew upon him in the first year of hostilities: a sense that it was a total war; a war of industry, mass mobilisation, and 'a nation in arms'; a struggle that was as much political as military.

Lee's perception was much more limited: that of a planter-aristocrat and Virginia patriot. But he grasped that the North's will to win would prove decisive: that the South could survive only by breaking the bond that connected the 'black' Republican in the White House with the mass of the Northern people. And there seemed only one easy way to do that: by taking the war to the enemy – by invading his territory, plundering his ▶

ANTIETAM



Anti-clockwise from top right

[1] A group of 'contrabands' – escaped slaves in Union Army service – during the American Civil War. The flood of contrabands during the first year of the war underpinned a growing demand for legal emancipation. The term 'contrabands' reflected the fact that until the Emancipation Proclamation they remained technically the 'property' of American citizens.

[2] Lee's ragged, half-starved soldiers lived on green apples and green corn as they marched through Maryland in September 1862. It was said they were so filthy you would smell them before you saw them if you were downwind.

[3] A Union infantry company photographed in column of march during the American Civil War.

[4] Confederate dead line the Hagerstown Pike, which ran alongside the Cornfield, one of Antietam's principal killing-grounds.

property, and undermining his belief that victory was possible and worthwhile. Specifically, Lee wanted military victories on Northern soil that would underpin the political challenge of the North's compromise-peace Democrats in their internal battle against win-the-war Republicans. Equally, such victories might convince the British and the French that the Confederacy should be granted recognition and supported in pursuing a negotiated settlement.

It was in accord with that politico-strategic vision that Lee's army crossed the Potomac on 4-6 September. They stank from lack of washing, were dressed like tramps, often marched barefoot, and when they first came across the river they were half-starved. Yet they found enough in Maryland to keep them going, living partly off green corn and green apples, and on 15 September, moreover, they took the Union arsenal at Harpers Ferry, capturing a great haul of arms

110,000 men and 450 cannon were packed into a stretch of farmland around five miles long and three miles wide with no option but to slug it out head-to-head.

and supplies along with 12,000 soldiers and 500 'contrabands'.

Contrabands – as they had come to be called – were escaped slaves who had entered Union service as general labourers. The Confederates now returned those they caught to slavery; Lee's army, in this sense, was an army of counter-revolution. Not that it looked it: ragged to start with, it grew worse as rapid marches deep into enemy country left a trail of stragglers and deserters in its wake, men lost because they simply could not keep up or because they believed they had signed up to defend the South not invade the North. But the ones that remained, around 35,000, whatever they looked like, were exceptionally tough veteran troops: possibly the finest fighting force in the world at the time.

An accident of history

The combination of Lee's audacity and McClellan's pusillanimity might have delivered a Confederate victory against the odds. But an accident of history intervened. Lee crossed the Potomac, moved west of the South Mountain barrier, and then divided his army into three, sending Jackson to take Harpers Ferry, Longstreet to Hagerstown, and D H Hill and 'Jeb' Stuart to blocking positions at Turner's Gap and Crampton's Gap.

This broke the rules: it meant splitting the Army of Northern Virginia with a greatly superior enemy force near at hand. But Lee knew McClellan's fatal flaw and played to it; and no doubt he would have got away with it but for the accident. A Union soldier found a copy of Lee's orders wrapped around three cigars in an abandoned Confederate

camp. The document was recognised for what it was and delivered to McClellan's headquarters. There a staff officer who recognised the handwriting was able to confirm its authenticity. 'Now I know what to do,' declared McClellan. 'Here is a paper with which if I cannot whip "Bobbie Lee", I will be willing to go home.'

But even with a more than two-to-one advantage in numbers, a united army moving against a divided one, and crystal-clear intelligence about the enemy's whereabouts, McClellan's 'slows' never let up. Six hours elapsed between receipt of the critical intelligence and the issuing of orders to the commanders of the army's forward elements. And when should they move? The following morning would do.

A Confederate sympathiser soon got news to Lee of the Union intelligence coup. Unlike his counterpart, the

Confederate commander had gallopers dispatched with fresh orders in an instant. Nonetheless, he was too late to save the mountain passes, where the Union men drove back the Rebel defenders on 14 September. But still McClellan moved with caution, giving Lee the time he needed to reunite the scattered fragments of his army. Even when McClellan caught up with the Rebels at Antietam, he waited through

Below The Battle of Antietam, 17 September 1862. Had McClellan launched simultaneous attacks along the whole Rebel line, he would almost certainly have destroyed Lee's army. But he did not. Instead the battle rolled out from north to south during the long day's fighting, with one Union corps after another taking the main brunt, as Lee shifted his heavily outnumbered men from one threatened sector to another – though the final attack was only halted by the timely arrival of A P Hill's corps, which arrived at the end of a 17-mile forced march from Harpers Ferry.





Above Andrew Gardner's photo of the Confederate dead at the Dunker Church after the battle.

Right Union men assault the Rebel line near the Dunker Church on the northern side of the battlefield, where some of the fiercest fighting of the Civil War raged for several hours on the morning of 17 September 1862.

the whole of 16 September, planning an attack for the morrow, letting pass a day in which Lee, with many divisions still on the march, was outnumbered three to one.

Early morning: the Cornfield

The battle opened at dawn on 17 September with an attack by 'Fighting Joe' Hooker's I Corps on the far left of the Rebel line. Many of his men found themselves funnelled between two woods into a 30-acre cornfield where the ripe crop stood head-height. The fighting of packed firing lines which now erupted here was close-up and relentless.

'Men I cannot say fell; they were knocked out of the ranks by dozens,' reported Major Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin. 'But we jumped over the fence, and pushed on, loading, firing, and shouting as we advanced. There was, on the part of the men, great hysterical excitement, eagerness to go forward, and reckless disregard of life, of everything but victory.'

'The men are loading and firing with demoniacal fury, and shouting and laughing hysterically, and the



whole field before us is covered with Rebels fleeing for life into the woods. Great numbers of them are shot while climbing over the high post-and-rail fences along the turnpike.'

Hooker backed the assault with a line of three-dozen cannon, which blasted the Rebel line on the far side of the Cornfield and helped break it. But Lee was making careful calculations and shifting men from other sectors to bolster Jackson's defence on the left. John Bell Hood's Texas division now smashed into Hooker's battered regiments and drove them back across the Cornfield, restoring the Rebel line.

Only now did Joseph Mansfield's Union XII Corps, that was supposed to have reinforced Hooker's attack, come effectively into action: only after Hooker's men had been fought out, that

is, and just in time to be knocked back with them by the euphoric Confederate counterattack.

This was to be the pattern of the day. While McClellan's men went in piecemeal, one corps at a time, each time against a single section of the enemy line, Lee's men were shifted backwards and forwards throughout the long day in a masterly tactical exercise in economy of force.

Mid-morning: the Sunken Lane

It was the Sunken Lane that became 'the Bloody Lane'. Old 'Bull' Sumner's Union II Corps came into action as Mansfield recoiled, one of his divisions going through East Woods into the Cornfield, while the other two hit the centre of Lee's line, where D H Hill's men were holding a deep-cut farm road

that angled and wound its way along half a mile of ground. The Sunken Lane was a natural defensive position, made stronger for the fact that it generally ran below the crest, so the Union men were silhouetted against the skyline at close range as they came over to attack it.

The carnage here was as bad as anything in a terrible war full of carnage. The struggle lasted four hours, with one Union brigade after another shot away on ground that was eventually carpeted with thousands of dead and dying. But the attrition was worse for the heavily outnumbered Rebels, who eventually broke and ran; and we can see why in the shocking photographs taken by Andrew Gardner shortly after the battle – the men in grey and butternut lie heaped along the Bloody Lane.

This was the moment to launch the massed Union reserves into the breach, for the centre of Lee's army had been blasted away, leaving it divided in two and open to destruction. It was not to be. Franklin's and Porter's corps, around 15,000 men in total, were deployed behind the Union centre and might now have moved to exploit Sumner's desperately expensive victory. But they did not. McClellan's perception of the situation was the opposite of the truth: he imagined Lee about to launch a massive counterattack with superior numbers. 'It would not be prudent to make the attack,' he told Franklin. Lee patched up his line.

One Union brigade after another was shot away on ground that was eventually carpeted with thousands of dead and dying.

Right Union men storm across the bridge over Antietam Creek on the southern side of the battlefield. Too late. The battle had already died down elsewhere, allowing Lee to shift reinforcements to his right; and when his battered line eventually began to give way, A P Hill's corps reached the battlefield and quickly crumpled the Union flank.

Afternoon: Burnside's Bridge

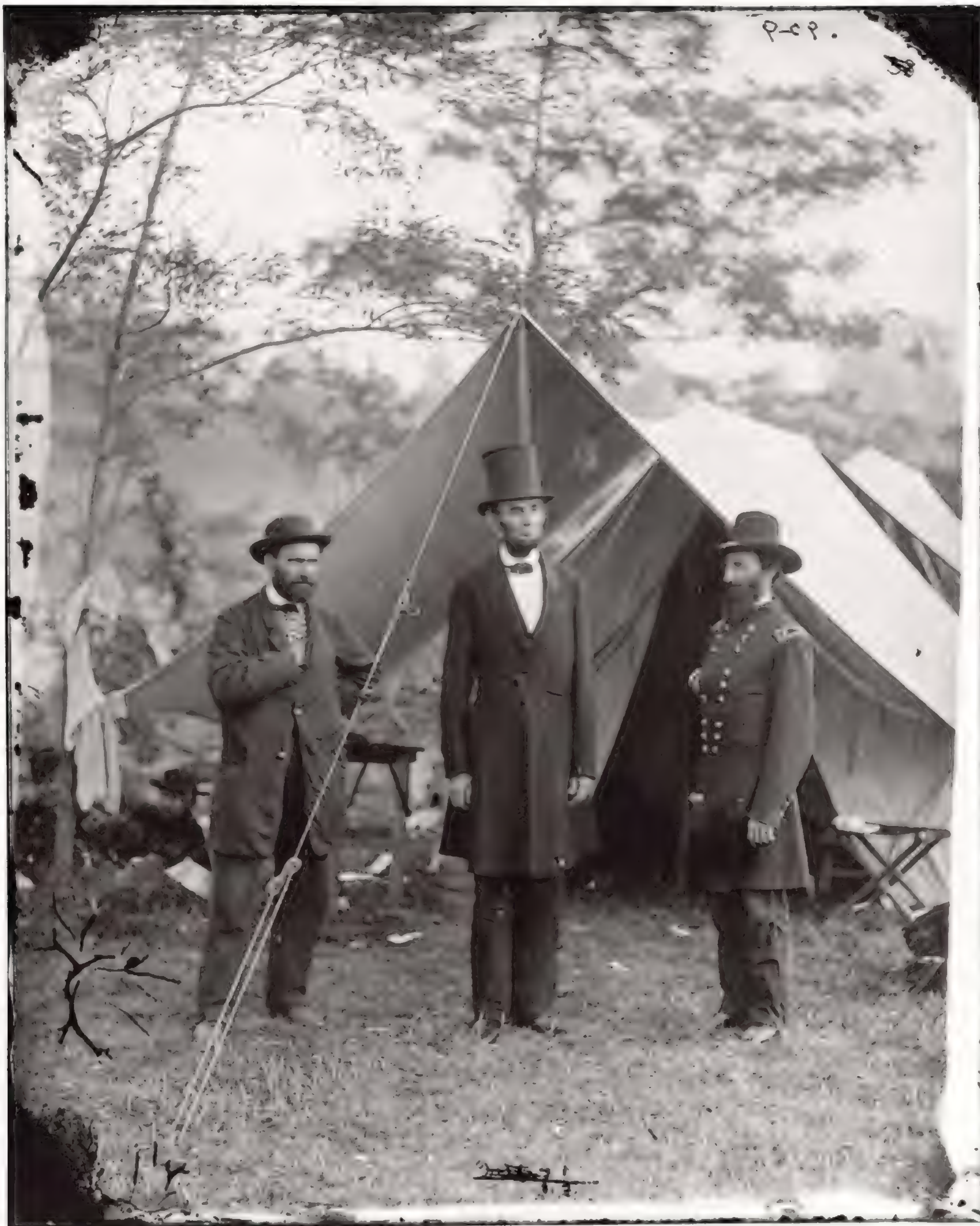
Ambrose Burnside did not receive McClellan's order to attack the Rebel right until about 10am – four hours after the battle had begun. And he did not manage to get the 13,000 men of his IX Corps across the Antietam Creek and moving up the slope on the far side until about 3pm. By then, the battle had petered out on the Rebel left and in the centre. Whereas Rebel strength on their right facing Burnside had been down to

just 4,000 men earlier in the day, now it had begun to build up again.

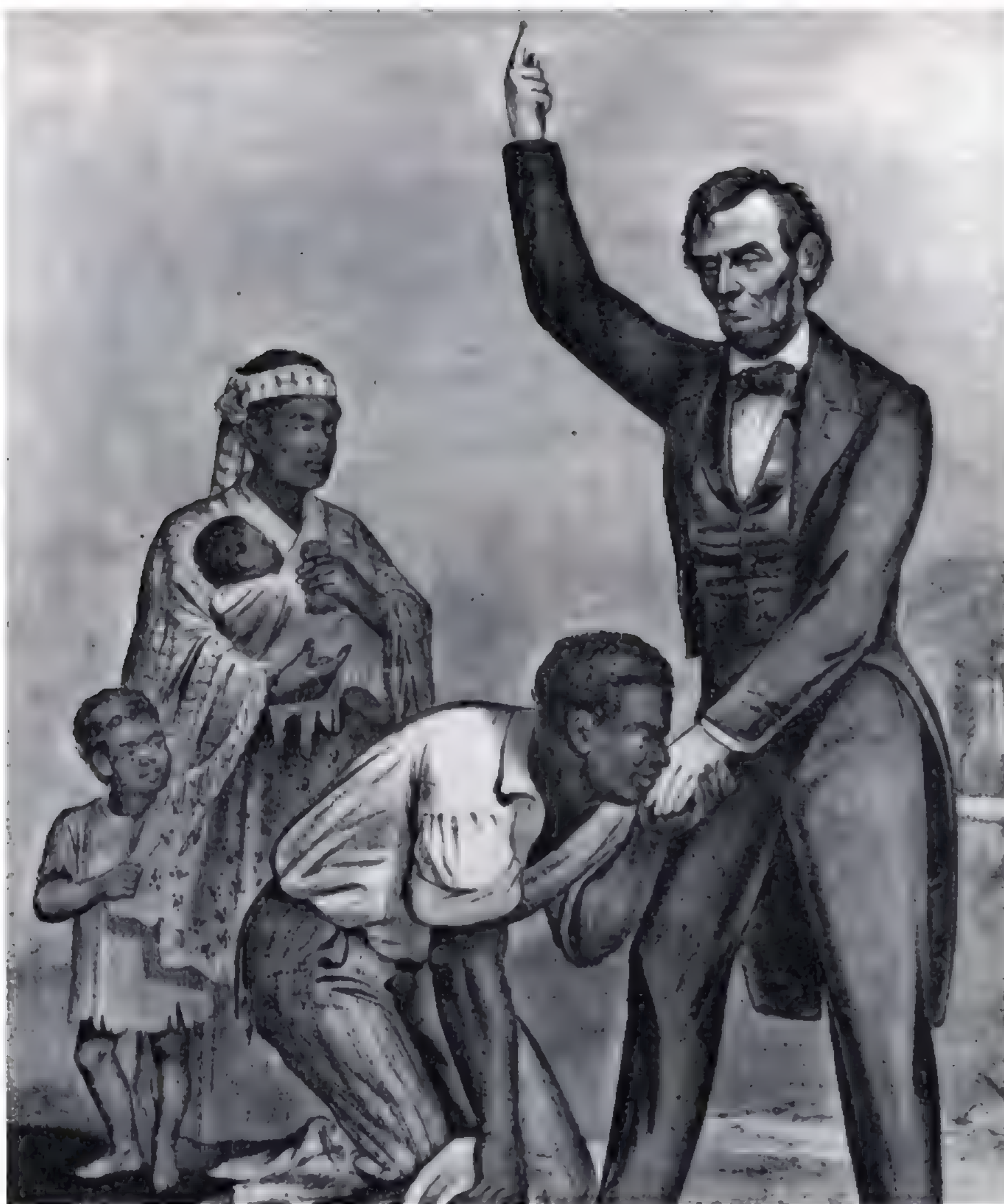
But not enough. Though still fighting hard, the Rebels were tumbled backwards into Sharpsburg itself, and by 4pm it looked likely that Burnside would capture the Harpers Ferry Road south of the town that was Lee's only line of retreat. Even now, a Union victory was possible. Had McClellan reinforced Burnside's attack with some of the 20,000 or so of his men who had ▶



ANTIETAM



Above Abraham Lincoln at Antietam, standing 6 foot 4 inches tall (his legs just long enough to reach the ground, he told a young boy fascinated by his height), and wearing his trademark stovepipe hat (which doubled as a portable bureau, conveying his papers, including speeches he was due to deliver).



Above An abolitionist print depicting 'Honest' Abe freeing the slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation created a surge of abolitionist sentiment across the North.

still done no fighting, he might have destroyed the main field army of the Confederacy.

Instead, a dust cloud on the south-western horizon turned first into a column of marching men and then into a flapping parade of Confederate battle flags. It was A P Hill. Setting out at 7.30am that morning, he had marched all day from Harpers Ferry, leaving hundreds of stragglers along 17 miles of road. There were only a few thousand of them and they were exhausted, but they crashed into Burnside's flank and rolled it up.

Emancipation

Antietam was the turning-point in the American Civil War. It ended the Confederate surge which had begun in the early summer. It threw back an invasion of the North and saved the Union capital. It destroyed any immediate prospect of European recognition for the Confederacy and intervention to achieve a compromise peace.

But it did something more. Lincoln had grasped the essence of the great conflict now under way better than any of his generals. He had grasped that it was a political struggle – a war between two peoples representing rival social systems – and that it was a total war of mass mobilisation, mass production, and battlefield attrition. He had grasped that the war would be long, hard, and brutal.

What followed from this was the centrality of slavery. The labour of four million Southern slaves freed Southern whites to fight in defence of slavery. Emancipation would encourage those slaves to escape to freedom and work for Union victory. It would turn Southern secession into a slave-owners' rebellion and Northern abolitionism into the revolutionary spine of a war of liberation. It would create two magnetic poles: one for slavery, one for the Union and the freedom enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. It would radicalise

the war and thereby galvanise the resistance of the American people.

A week after Antietam, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It declared that all slaves held in states in rebellion against the Union after 1 January 1863 would be 'thenceforward and forever free'.

'There is now no possible hope of reconciliation,' wrote General-in-Chief Halleck to Ulysses S Grant. 'We must conquer the Rebels or be conquered by them... Every slave withdrawn from the enemy is the equivalent of a white man put *hors de combat*.'

'GOD BLESS ABRAHAM LINCOLN!' blazoned the abolitionist *New York Tribune*. 'We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree,' declared veteran free-black abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Union soldiers conceived an affection for Lincoln, claimed abolitionist college professor and regimental colonel Joshua Chamberlain, that was 'wonderful in its intensity'.

In the 1864 presidential election, McClellan stood against Lincoln on a Democratic end-the-war ticket. McClellan had been a rotten general but a first-class quartermaster. He had always looked after his soldiers, and they had rewarded him with enthusiastic cheers. But a far deeper bond in due course formed between the Union men and the abolitionist President who had come to be the living embodiment of their struggle. In 1864, only one in five Union soldiers voted for their former commander; the rest cast their ballots for Abraham Lincoln, all-out victory, and the abolition of slavery. 🇺🇸

GO EXPLORE



AMERICAN CIVIL WAR TOURS

For information on American Civil War Tours, contact Old Country Military & History Tours Inc – www.oldcountrytours.com or oldcount@aol.com

SUBSCRIBE TO **MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY** MAGAZINE TODAY AND SAVE OVER £10*

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION (12 issues)

UK DIRECT DEBIT ONLY
£34.95 ~~£47.40~~
SAVE OVER 25%

UK CHEQUE/CARD PAYMENT
£36.95 ~~£47.40~~
SAVE OVER 20%

Overseas CHEQUE/CARD
PAYMENT
£46.95 ~~£60.00~~
SAVE OVER 20%

SAVE OVER 25%



SUBSCRIBE FOR ONE YEAR (12 ISSUES)

BY POST *Military History Monthly*, Lamb House, Church St, London W4 2PD

YOUR DETAILS

Your Name

Your Address

Postcode

Email

Tel. no.

SAVE OVER 25% ~~RRP £47.40~~

*Special **Direct Debit** rate, **ONLY £34.95**

☐ **Direct Debit** Please complete the form

Please fill in the whole form using a ballpoint pen and send to:
Military History Monthly, Lamb House, Church Street, London W4 2PD
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society



Operator's Identification Number
9 7 1 7 4 3

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Church Street Publishing Ltd
Direct Debit from the account shown below.
The contribution subject to the guarantee
assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee.
I understand that this instruction may stay
with Church Street Publishing Ltd and I
authorise it to be passed electronically to
my Bank/Building Society.

You may cancel your subscription
at any time. Unless you cancel,
your subscription will continue
automatically at the special rate of
just £42 per year – saving over £3
off the full rate.

SAVE OVER 20% ~~RRP £47.40~~

Cheque/Credit Card rate **ONLY £36.95**

Overseas rate £46.95

☐ **£36.95** (UK) ☐ **£46.95** (Overseas)

☐ **Cheque** I enclose a cheque for _____ payable to *Military History Monthly*

☐ **Credit Card** Please debit my Mastercard/Visa/Maestro/Delta the sum of _____

Card No.

Issue No. (Maestro only)

Expiry Date

Start Date

Signature

Date

Privacy Policy: *Military History Monthly* may send you details of our products and services that we think would be of interest to you. Please tick if you do not wish to receive such offers ☐. Occasionally we may pass your details to selected companies. If you do not wish to receive their products or offers, please tick this box ☐. REF: MHM31

MILITARY HISTORY MONTHLY BINDERS AND SLIP CASES NOW AVAILABLE

We are now able to supply both binders and slip cases to house your magazines. They each hold up to 12 issues in a smart black case, and both are available for £15 (including UK postage and packing and VAT), or £20 for our overseas readers.



Order by phone on +44 (0)20 8819 5580.

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

www.military-history.org/subscribe

SUBSCRIBE BY PHONE

Battlefields & History

Our 2013 programme of Ancient, Medieval, Napoleonic and 20th Century tours include the anniversary tours of Gettysburg 1863, Kursk 1943, Leipzig 1813 and the Dambusters 1943. We will also be looking at Budapest in WW2 and after, Alfred the Great, Scapa Flow, Berlin 1945, the Civil Service Rifles in WW1, Sicily 1943 and many more.

We have selected a team of guides whose knowledge and experience, clear explanations and orientation bring history to life.

*Ask our friendly staff for our
2013 Brochure or visit our website*

Holts
are pleased
to support
Military History
Monthly

Holts Tours - The original and still the best.

www.holts.co.uk

01293 865000

*All our tours are
100% financially protected*



Reason why...



The Crimean War Research Society
www.crimewar.org



WALLIS & WALLIS

EST. 1928

WEST STREET AUCTION GALLERIES, LEWES, SUSSEX, ENGLAND, BN7 2NJ
TEL: +44 (0) 1273 480208 FAX: (0) 1273 476562

BRITAIN'S SPECIALIST AUCTIONEERS OF ARMS, ARMOUR, MEDALS & MILITARIA

2013 DATES

SALE	DAYS	LAST ENTRIES (am)
553	April 30 & May 1 – including	March 23
SPRING CONNOISSEUR COLLECTORS' AUCTION		MARCH 23
554	June 11	May 4
555	July 23	June 15
556	September 3	July 27
557	Oct 22 & 23 – including	September 7
AUTUMN CONNOISSEUR COLLECTORS' AUCTION		SEPTEMBER 7
558	December 3	October 26

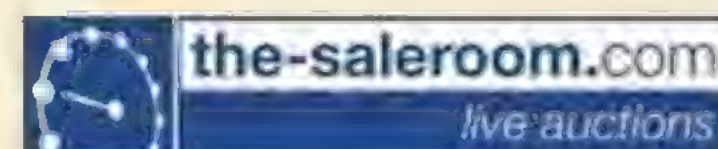
"Get to know the real value of your collection" – our last 10 Sale Catalogues, complete with prices realised, are available, price £30, incl. postage

No charge for payment by debit card



R. Jackson, 17th Lancers. Killed in the Charge of the Light Brigade. Verified. Reserved for the Spring Connoisseur Collectors' Auction 30th April and 1st May 2013.

If you
are reading
this advert, you
can apply for
a **FREE 2013**
Colour Illustrated
calendar.



email: auctions@wallisandwallis.org

web site: <http://www.wallisandwallis.co.uk>

A History of the
BRITISH
ARMY
IN 25 BATTLES

DUNKIRK, 1940



DUNKIRK, 1940

This vivid contemporary magazine illustration depicts the Dunkirk evacuation in progress. The rescue of a third of a million troops was as decisive as the German *Blitzkrieg* which had caused their defeat. The recovery of the British Army from the beaches meant that Britain could fight on.

Inset General Viscount John Vereker Gort (1886-1946), Commander-in-Chief, British Expeditionary Force, 1939-1940. Alan Brooke considered him 'the best platoon commander in France'.



A History of the
BRITISH
ARMY
IN 25 BATTLES

DUNKIRK, 1940

DUNKIRK



28 MAY-4 JUNE 1940

Outgeneralled, the British Army crashed to defeat before the German *Blitzkrieg* in May 1940. The greatest defeat in British imperial history, it was the price of interwar conservatism. But the soldiers had fought with gritty determination and most of them were rescued from the beaches of Dunkirk. So Britain would survive to fight again.

The English soldier was in excellent physical condition. He bore his own wounds with stoical calm. The losses of his troops he discussed with complete equanimity. He did not complain of hardships. In battle he was tough and dogged. His conviction that England would conquer in the end was unshakeable...

This opinion was enshrined in an official military report of the German IV Corps, Sixth Army, discussing operations in north-west Europe during May 1940. It continued: 'The English soldier has always shown himself to be a fighter of high value. Certainly the Territorial divisions are inferior to the Regular troops in training, but where morale is concerned they are their equal.'

'In defence the Englishman took any punishment that came his way. During the fighting, IV Corps took relatively fewer English prisoners than in engagements with the French or Belgians. On the other hand, casualties on both sides were high.'

Something had clearly survived of the centuries-old British military tradition. It was rooted in the militia service of



Right 'In battle he was tough and dogged': so said an official German report about the British infantry they faced in May 1940. Again and again, in a collapsing strategic situation, lines were improvised and held on with grim determination. Here, British anti-tank gunners await the *Panzers* amid the ruins.

'the middling sort' in the Middle Ages, and it had given rise to a distinctive 'British way of war' embodied in the practice of the New Model Army, in the victories of Marlborough's and Wellington's redcoats, and in the steady, massed, precision musketry at Mons in 1914. At times the thread of tradition had worn perilously thin, but something always survived – the British at war continued to be an army of free men, fighting defensively in line, each man supporting his mates on either side, in the manner of King Harold's *fyrð* on Senlac Hill.

That this was so became increasingly apparent as the disaster of May 1940 unfolded. The British Army might have fallen apart. Much of the French Army did so (though not all) once it was clear that the Germans had broken the line and surrounded the main *masse de manoeuvre* of the Allied forces in Belgium. But it did not. Instead, British commanders thought on their feet, acted fast, and improvised hasty defensive lines out of almost nothing, while the men on the ground dug in when ordered and fought on with grim resolution in a battle of a kind that none were prepared for.

Colonel Blimp

The problem in May 1940 was not the resilience of the British soldier. It was the triumph of the Blimps in the interwar period. The famous cartoon character Colonel Blimp appeared regularly in London's *Evening Standard* during the 1930s. The story is that cartoonist David Low was inspired to create the character after overhearing a conversation in which two military men had declared that cavalry officers should be permitted to wear spurs inside tanks. Blimp – pompous, opinionated, red-faced, resolutely opposed to change in any form – was satire, not simple invention; Low was describing a military reality.

Briefly, in 1918, the British had had a mass national Army of citizen conscripts supplied with modern weapons and tactical doctrine. This was the Army that won the war. But the union of Army and people had been an unhappy one, and its dissolution after the war as the military shrank to a tenth or less of its former size was almost universally welcomed.

Interwar Britain was a polarised society. The economy crashed after the war amid a wave of industrial unrest. Revolution was in the air in 1919, and wage cuts later provoked the General Strike of 1926. Despite the apparent inducement of permanent mass unemployment, revulsion

at the slaughter in the trenches combined with the radical mood inside the working class to discourage military enlistment.

The Army did nothing to help itself. Its deployment against striking workers at home in 1919 and 1926 and against nationalist revolt in Ireland, Egypt, and India placed it at odds with much public opinion. Renewed emphasis on drill and discipline, a redrawing of class lines between officers and men, and the rotten pay and conditions of ordinary soldiers all combined to make the Army an unattractive career choice.

The Army turned in on itself. The artillery put aside most of its heavy-calibre guns and refocused on its more mobile field equipment. The cavalry reasserted itself as a pre-eminent arm after its marginalisation on the Western Front during the war. Twenty-six battalions of tanks were reduced to four, and the discarded vehicles were left to rust in a field in Dorset.

The critics of the interwar Army were not confined to marginal mavericks. Field-Marshal Chetwode's farewell address as Commander-in-Chief in India in 1934 included a scathing indictment of the Army he was leaving: 'The longer I remain in the service, the more wooden and the more regulation-bound do I find a British officer to be.'

The Army was, in a sense, returning to pre-war 'normal' – becoming again a small-wars colonial army, combining home duties with imperial policing, and having no expectation of engaging in another full-scale land war against a major modern power. In this, though, it was simply reflecting more-or-less consistent British foreign policy from 1918 to 1937.

What is the Army for?

It is misguided to pronounce from the vantage-point of hindsight that the Army should not have been run down in the way that it was during the interwar period. All societies face competing demands on resources; all decisions about how resources are allocated involve a balancing of different priorities. The victory of fascism in Germany in 1933 could not have been predicted. The relentlessness of Nazi imperialism did not become clear until the late 1930s.

Equally unfathomable was the likely shape of any future war. The RAF had become a third service in its own right in April 1918. Aerial bombing appeared to offer cut-price policing of colonial trouble-spots. The prophets of air power made chilling predictions of devastation



Above British tanks on their way to the front in spring 1940. Unfortunately, there were not enough, they were of the wrong sort, and no-one knew how to use them properly.

from the air, and a British prime minister informed the House of Commons that 'the bomber will always get through'.

Little wonder, then, that the Army became what Lord Hailsham called 'a Cinderella of the forces'. The Royal Navy continued, of course, to play the primary role in both imperial and home-defence strategy, but the RAF now also creamed off resources, the beneficiary of a growing conviction that air power had become central to national security. To make matters worse, RAF policy was to de-prioritise tactical support of ground forces in favour of, first and foremost, building a strategic bomber force as a deterrent, and, second, with increasing urgency in the late 1930s, to create an air-defence system for the homeland.

But what was the alternative? British capitalism was in decline, its sluggish performance in the interwar period comparing badly with that of the US in the 1920s and that of Germany and Russia in the 1930s. Indeed, Britain, the original 'workshop of the world', was falling so far behind its competitors that it would be bankrupted by the Second World War, becoming a financial and industrial tributary of the United States by 1941. Yet the British Empire had only just reached its greatest extent: victory and Versailles had awarded it rich prizes at the expense of the defeated Central Powers. The native populations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, on the other hand, radicalised by the war and the ▶

A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

DUNKIRK, 1940

wave of revolution that followed, were increasingly restless. A shrinking share of global wealth; a growing effort of imperial control: the interwar British Empire was overextended.

This is the reality behind the famous 'Ten Year Rule'. Proclaimed in 1919, it stated: 'It should be assumed that the British Empire will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years, and that no expeditionary force is required for this purpose... The principal function of the military and air forces is to provide garrisons for India, Egypt, the new mandated territory, and all territories (other than self-governing) under British control, as well as the necessary support to the civil power at home...'

Except for a growing preoccupation with air power, little changed thereafter for the best part of two decades. As late as December 1937, a meeting of the Chamberlain Cabinet listed Britain's defence priorities as follows: first, the security of the United Kingdom, especially from air attack; second, the protection of imperial communications; third, defence

of imperial possessions; and only fourth, 'co-operation in defence of territories of any allies Britain might have in war'.

The tank problem

The effects of interwar government policy were exemplified by the tank problem. As late as 1936, the British Army was spending four times as much on horse feed as on petrol. In the May 1940 campaign, it did not have enough tanks, and those it did have were of the wrong sort and were used badly – a result of lack of spending, lack of experience, and lack of doctrine in relation to armoured forces over the preceding two decades.

Ironically, of course, the British had pioneered the development of the tank, and, unsurprisingly therefore, had produced two leading advocates of armoured warfare in Colonel (later Major-General) John 'Boney' Fuller (1878-1966), who had served as chief staff officer in the Tanks Corps during the First World War, and Captain Basil Liddell Hart (1895-1970), who fought as an infantry officer in the trenches.

By the early 1930s, Fuller was arguing that the relatively immobile linear battlefield of the First World War, in which mass conscript armies confronted one another across clearly defined 'no-man's-land', was a thing of the past. Henceforward, the typical battlefield would comprise an entire region in

In the May 1940 campaign, the British Army did not have enough tanks, and those it did have were of the wrong sort.

which small, mechanised, highly trained armies would manoeuvre in depth, supported by aircraft, and pivoting on dispersed strong-points, anti-tank bastions, and defended supply-bases.

Liddell Hart's emphasis was different, but the main thrust of his argument pointed in the same direction. Reflecting on the 'infiltration' tactics employed on the Western Front in 1918, he extrapolated that these would become decisive with the further development of armour, air power, and lorry-borne infantry; the ease and speed of mechanised breakthroughs would produce 'expanding torrents' of men and firepower spreading out across the enemy rear, destroying the battlefield's traditional linear configuration.

The problem was that you could not guard the sea-lanes with a tank, nor deter an enemy bomber. Equally, the heavier armoured vehicles were far from ideal if the priority was policing a nationalist demonstration or suppressing a tribal

Below Most German tanks – as apparent from this contemporary illustration – were thin-skinned and under-gunned during the 1940 campaign. The key differences with the Allies were in organisation and doctrine, not technology: the Germans massed their armour and used it as a mailed fist to punch a hole through the enemy line and unleash what Basil Liddell Hart called 'an expanding torrent' into the enemy rear.





Above The German *Blitzkrieg* of May 1940. While Leeb's Army Group C fixed the French garrison of the Maginot Line on the Franco-German frontier, and Bock's Army Group B advanced into Belgium and fixed the main Allied *masse de manoeuvre* coming to meet them, the decisive breakthrough was made by nine armoured divisions lunging through the Ardennes towards the Meuse crossings near Sedan. Ten days after the start of the offensive, seven days after their first elements crossed the Meuse, the *Panzers* reached the sea, cutting the Allied armies in half. A triumph of organisation and doctrine, it was one of the greatest victories in military history.

rebellion on a remote frontier. In consequence, the resources were not made available to develop an armoured warfare capacity in the interwar years.

Lack of experience led to muddle over design, organisation, and doctrine. Armoured vehicles could be used in various ways – for colonial policing, for reconnaissance and screening, in close infantry support, and as armoured spearheads if massed in independent mechanised formations. So what sort of tank is ideal?

The British entered the Second World War with two main types: heavily armoured 'T' tanks that moved at walking pace, had light armament, and were designed for close co-operation with attacking infantry; and lightly armoured 'cruiser' tanks that were fast but still lacked heavy armament, as they were intended mainly for reconnaissance, screening, and other light duties. Neither fitted the demands of May 1940.

The Germans, by contrast, had already developed the concept of a main battle tank – an ideal design that attempted to combine speed, robustness, protection, gun-power, and ease and cheapness of manufacture. Achievement may still have fallen well short of aspiration, but the thinking was sound, as was the grouping of tanks in independent *Panzer* divisions, and the concentration of these armoured divisions at the *point d'appui* (the 'fulcrum' of the battlefield).

General Gort's army

The British Expeditionary Force that fought the Dunkirk campaign bore all the hallmarks of interwar policy. The military establishment had plunged from 3.5 million in 1918 to 370,000 by the end of 1920. Further drastic reductions followed in 1922, and thereafter the Army budget fell steadily every year from £43.5 million in 1923 to just under £36 million in 1932.

These reductions reflected the Ten Year Rule, the assumption that Britain would not be obliged to form an 'expeditionary force' to wage war on the Continent in the foreseeable future. The policy did not change even with the growing threat to British interests during the 1930s from Imperial Japan in the Far East, Fascist Italy in the Middle East, and Nazi Germany in Central Europe. Appeasement dominated policy until virtually the end of the decade, mainly because most of Britain's rulers continued to regard revolution and Stalin's Russia as greater dangers than fascism and German imperialism.

By 1937, however, the policy was beginning to change. Leslie Hore-Belisha was appointed Secretary of State for War when Chamberlain became Prime Minister in May 1937, and he set about modernising Britain's armed forces. Pay and conditions were improved, conservative generals were sidelined, ▶

A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

DUNKIRK, 1940

and Liddell Hart was brought in as an unofficial government advisor.

The wind of change strengthened during 1938 and the first half of 1939, as it became clearer that appeasement was failing in the face of Nazi rearmament and aggression. The military budget shot up, a limited form of conscription was introduced, and spending on new equipment meant that when war broke out the British Expeditionary Force – initially 160,000 men and 23,000 vehicles – was the only fully motorised army on the Continent.

The 'Phoney War' between September 1939 and May 1940 allowed the belated military build-up to continue, such that the BEF had swelled to around 400,000 by the time the serious fighting began.

It was commanded by General Viscount John Vereker Gort VC, a living symbol of the Old Guard's return to power. General Alan Brooke described him as 'the best platoon commander in France'. A guardsman and very much a regimental soldier, he had, in British Army historian Allan Mallinson's opinion, 'risen by that private Household elevator which had once been a feature of the Army'. Consequently, in May 1940, as a whirlwind armoured *Blitzkrieg* engulfed his army, he was soon 'out of his depth'.

Blitzkrieg

On 13 May 1940, General Heinz Guderian's XIX *Panzerkorps* crossed the River Meuse at Sedan and entered French territory. Supported by pioneer assault units and screaming dive-bomber attacks, his three *Panzer* divisions (1st, 2nd, and 10th) smashed through weak French defences in a sector where no attack had been expected. Somewhat earlier on the same day, a short distance further north, General Erwin Rommel's 7th *Panzer* Division had also crossed the Meuse at Dinant.

It was just three days since the start of the German attack in the West. The *Panzers* had passed through the Ardennes Forest, widely assumed to be impenetrable to armoured columns, in order to strike the weakest point in the French line – the hinge between the main mass of the Allied armies advancing into Belgium to the north and the formidable Maginot

Line defences along the Franco-German border to the south.

The German plan had been conceived by General Erich von Manstein. It had faced determined opposition from more conservative generals. Their preferred plan was the one that had failed in 1914: a massive turning movement through Belgium and north-eastern France directed at Paris. The Allied plan was a mirror-image of this: to hold the Maginot Line in moderate force and to direct a vast mobile army into Belgium to confront the German attack head-on. The widely expected outcome was stalemate and attrition in the traditional cockpit of European conflict.

Few German officers could see the potential of mobile armoured warfare. *Blitzkrieg* – 'lightning war' – was a combination of advanced industrial technology and radical military thinking. Both were necessary. In spring 1940, the French had more tanks and fighter-aircraft than the Germans. But they did not deploy them according to a new conception of war. Nor, until the last minute, did the Germans. Then, Hitler's personal intervention, driven primarily by his deep-rooted fear of a war of attrition, led to the adoption of the Manstein plan. Instead of being concentrated in the north for the invasion of Belgium, the German armour was massed at the far edge of the Ardennes.

Breakthrough

During 14 May, the *Panzer* generals expanded and strengthened their bridgeheads over the Meuse, beat off poorly managed French counter-attacks, and then pushed their armoured spearheads westwards. Henceforward,

Below Allied troops wading out to a waiting Clyde river steamer.

The French PM had woken Churchill with a phone call to announce, 'We are beaten. We have lost the battle.'

they kept moving, ignoring the evolving threat to their flanks and line of communication as they drove deeper into northern France. The theory was that the speed of the advance and the disruption to the enemy's command and communication systems would prevent the concentration and co-ordination necessary for a successful counterattack.

So it proved. Keeping the River Somme on their left as a defensive barrier, the *Panzers* drove for the Channel ports. On 20 May they reached the sea near Abbeville. On 25 May they captured Boulogne. On the 26th, Calais.

As early as the morning of 15 May, the French Prime Minister, Paul Reynaud, had woken Churchill with a phone call to announce, 'We are beaten. We have lost the battle.' He was correct. With a wide gap torn in the French line and the German armour racing towards the Channel, it was only a matter of days before the supply-line of the Allied army advancing into Belgium would be severed. As soon as that happened, it would begin to disintegrate, like a vast complex machine whose power is suddenly switched off.





Above The Dunkirk pocket. The defence of the shrinking perimeter and the management of the retreat to the sea and the maritime evacuation were masterly, especially given the surrender of the Belgian Army and the moral collapse of much of the French Army in the closing stages of the campaign.

Right Allied troops queuing on the Dunkirk beaches for their turn to be ferried to a transport. Despite repeated air-attacks and the knowledge that the perimeter around the beachhead was under siege, discipline and solidarity remained unbroken to the very end.



The speed and completeness of the German victory had thrown everyone – the Germans included – off balance. The military situation had been transformed beyond any expectations. No-one had planned for this. Improvisation was now the order of the day. Contingency – the mix of accident and on-the-spot decision that often decides history's direction – now determined, however, that the British Army would not be destroyed.

Five factors were decisive: the anxiety and vacillation of German high command; the intelligence and energy of some senior British officers in managing the defence of the shrinking perimeter around the trapped BEF; the gritty resilience of British soldiery when operating defensively with their backs to the wall; Gort's decision to disobey

orders from London and organise an immediate fighting retreat to Dunkirk; and the dynamic brilliance of Admiral Ramsay's improvised armada of rescue vessels.

Calais had fallen on 26 May, and the assumption was that the *Panzers* would now race eastwards to take the two remaining Channel ports of Dunkirk and Ostend, sealing the head of a bag of territory containing around half a million French, British, and Belgian soldiers.

But they did not. Hitler ordered the *Panzers* to halt. Debate about his reasons continues. So, too, does debate about

the significance of this decision. Some consider it the turning-point in the Second World War. What is certainly true is that it gave to the British that crucial window of time that enabled them to save their army and continue the war.

Most immediately, the German halt order enabled Gort to shift two divisions onto his left flank to plug the gap created when the Belgians surrendered. But this also meant abandoning any further possibility of mounting an effective counterattack with the French against the *Panzer* corridor. The BEF was now ►

A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

DUNKIRK, 1940

fighting a wholly defensive battle along the perimeter of a pocket of land around the port of Dunkirk.

Evacuation

Already, as early as 19 May, the British and French navies had been instructed to prepare sea transport for the besieged armies. At Dover, Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay set up Operation Dynamo. No sooner had he done so than his options began shutting down, with the loss of first Boulogne, then Calais. The evening Calais fell, the Admiralty signalled Ramsay that Operation Dynamo should commence immediately. Perhaps, with sufficient vigour, as many as 45,000 of Gort's trapped men might be brought home.

In fact, Ramsay was ahead of his superiors: he had already started evacuating non-essential personnel. In another respect, too, he now took matters into his own hands. Dunkirk's port facilities were soon out of commission, and the Admiral realised that he would have to take men straight off the beaches. On his own authority, therefore, he began requisitioning small boats, and searching out men who could sail them.

At Dunkirk itself, the Senior Naval Officer Ashore was also improvising. With the lack of port facilities and the disruption from German air attack, he had decided to speed up evacuation by utilising a flimsy wooden pier, the East Mole, 5-feet wide, stretching about 1,400 yards into the sea.

Henceforward, Royal Navy destroyers went one after the other to the East Mole to load up with men, while the small boats ran in and out from the beaches, passing between the lines of soldiers waiting waist-deep for their turn to be taken to the bigger ships anchored out to sea that would carry the Tommies home.

The Luftwaffe attacks were relentless, strafing and bombing the ships, the beaches, the Mole, and the throngs of men backed up around the port. The worst of it was when they hit a ship laden with men packed tight together on the decks. The surf, smeared oily black and blood-red, bobbed with bodies and bits of ship. The small boats weaved their way



Above Hundreds of small civilian vessels ferried Allied soldiers from the beaches to the larger ships waiting offshore – and sometimes all the way home across the Channel.

through corpses and wrecks to make a passage for the living.

It went on for days. Observers noted the patience of the soldiers, the professionalism of the Royal Navy crews, and the courage of the civilians crewing the small boats. There was criticism of the Royal Air Force for its poor showing against the *Luftwaffe*, but it was not entirely fair – 177 British aircraft were lost in the struggle to protect the beaches.

Retreat to victory

In the end, 230,000 men were taken off the East Mole, and another 100,000 off the beaches. On the final day, 3 June, the plan was to rescue the 30,000 French soldiers of the rearguard, who had kept the Germans at bay, holding the shrinking rim of the Dunkirk perimeter long enough to complete the evacuation. But when the time came, an estimated 40,000 soldiers emerged from the basements and ruins of Dunkirk, and very few of the valiant rearguard were among the last 26,000 evacuees.

Six destroyers, eight personnel ships, and over 200 small craft were lost during the evacuation. Left behind was virtually

all of the BEF's heavy equipment – some 600 tanks, more than 1,000 field or heavy guns, 500 anti-aircraft guns, 850 anti-tank guns, many thousands of anti-tank rifles, large numbers of lorries, cars, and motorbikes, and huge quantities of ammunition and supplies.

But a third of a million men had been rescued. Two-thirds of them were British, and these 224,000 trained soldiers gave Britain its fighting chance. Without them, there would have been no army to prevent an invasion. Without them, there were would have been no military nucleus around which to build the mass citizen-armies to come.

The campaign of May-June 1940 produced two of the most astonishing events in military history. One was the German armoured breakthrough between 13 and 20 May that trapped the main Allied army in Belgium and ensured the Nazi conquest of France. The second was the seaborne evacuation, against all the odds, of a third of a million soldiers – the men who, together with those of the Royal Navy and the RAF, would now prevent a Nazi conquest of Britain. ■

COMING NEXT

ALAMEIN

23 OCTOBER-4 NOVEMBER 1942

It was neither a big battle by Second World War standards, nor the military masterpiece the victorious Montgomery claimed it to be. But Alamein was, for the British at least, 'the end of the beginning' – the event which demonstrated that the British Army now had the equipment, training, and doctrine to fight a mid-20th-century war, and that therefore, fighting alongside powerful allies, it would eventually win the war.

The *Military History Monthly* History of the British Army in 25 Battles is being run in collaboration with the National Army Museum. Our special thanks are due to Alastair Massie, Head of Archives, Photographs, Film, and Sound.

A History of the
**BRITISH
ARMY**
IN 25 BATTLES

ALAMEIN, 1942

Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo museum



This museum is located in the fortifications that were built in 1874 to reinforce France's coastal defense. Bastion 32 served as the headquarters for the French and Allied forces during the Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo.

The Mémorial du Souvenir tells the incredible story of the battle and of the evacuation of more than 338,000 allied soldiers from the « Pocket of Dunkirk ».

In the museum, you will discover a rich exhibition of maps, pictures and both allied and German military material. Scale models of the sites of the operation, uniforms and weapons complete the collection.

A film using dramatic period footage, with a duration of approximately 15 minutes, gives an evocative overall view of the events of May-June 1940.

🕒 Open every day from 1st April to 30th September, from 10am to 12 noon 2 to 6 pm

💰 2013 Admission prices
Adults: € 4 - Groups: € 3.5 - School groups: € 3



Memorial du Souvenir

Courtines du Bastion 32

Rue des Chantiers de France - 59140 Dunkerque

A16 exit 60 - GPS : 51°2'46.31N - 2°22'52.25E

Bookings

Office de Tourisme

Phone: + 33 (0)3 28 26 27 31 - Fax: + 33 (0)3 28 26 27 80

production@ot-dunkerque.fr

www.dynamo-dunkerque.com



History

On the 10th May 1940, German army group B invaded Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. In response, three Allied armies were committed to the river Meuse to prevent attack. At the same time, German army group A burst through the Ardennes and advanced very quickly towards the French coast and the English Channel. By taking Boulogne sur Mer and Calais, the Germans succeeded in surrounding the allied troops in the so-called « pocket ».

Holland capitulated on the 15th May, and Belgium on the 28th. Facing an enemy which was better equipped and which outnumbered the allied troops, retreat was the only option for the French armies and the British Expeditionary Force, that had been stationed on the continent since the beginning of the « Phoney War » in September 1939.

15,000 French and British troops defended a narrow perimeter to prevent the Germans from taking Dunkirk. Thanks to the sacrifices of these soldiers, a naval fleet of around 1400 mostly British, but also French, Belgian and Dutch ships, succeeded in rescuing more than 338,000 soldiers from the beaches and the eastern mole.

On the 4th June, at dawn, the last ship left Dunkirk and the Germans entered the city that was in ruins. The success of the biggest evacuation in military history, a « Disaster turned to Triumph », gave a great boost to British morale, and is now seen as a major turning



Left David Niven and Leslie Howard.

THE FIRST OF THE FEW

In the second of his new occasional series, TV producer and historian **Taylor Downing** reviews a wartime Spitfire classic.

On 16 August 1940, Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited the control room of RAF Fighter Command's 11 Group at Uxbridge. The Battle of Britain had just gone up a gear as Goering had ordered his Luftwaffe bombers to strike at the RAF airfields in order to destroy Britain's air defences as a prelude to invasion.

Churchill was visibly moved as he watched the WAAFs calmly sliding markers across the big table-map at the centre of the room. One set of markers indicated the arrival of a fleet of German bombers with their fighter-escorts. Another set marked the squadrons of RAF fighters scrambled to intercept them. Churchill could vividly imagine the terrific battle raging in the skies above southern England, watched by millions on the ground below.

When he left in his official car with General Hastings Ismay, Churchill was silent for some minutes. Then he turned to Ismay and said: 'Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few.'

Ismay was struck by the memorable phrase. Four days later, Churchill used

'THE FEW'

On 20 August 1940, Churchill addressed the House of Commons in one of his most famous speeches of the war. He spoke for about an hour and began by reviewing the progress of the war.

He spoke of how this conflict had not seen the 'prodigious slaughter' of the First World War, but that the RAF fighter pilots had become the heroes of the hour 'whose brilliant actions we see with our own eyes day after day'.

He said that everyone's gratitude 'goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of war by their prowess and their devotion'. Then he rose to his crescendo with what would become one of the most famous phrases of the war: 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'

With the Battle of Britain still raging and the outcome far from certain, Churchill was playing the role of a real war-leader, rallying the nation with defiant words and phrases to inspire the people. A newspaper editor later said that a Churchill speech was as valuable as a 'new battleship'. Ed Murrow, the great American journalist who broadcast from London at the time, said that Churchill 'mobilized the English language and sent it into battle'.

However, his legendary words about the 'few' were only ever heard live by the members of Parliament in the House of Commons. The speech was not broadcast on BBC radio; people read the words in the newspapers and heard it quoted by newsreaders. It was only in 1949 that Churchill recorded these words, along with some of his other famous speeches, for Decca records, who released a set of 12-inch vinyl LPs of his wartime speeches. Any reading of these words by Churchill heard today comes not from 1940 but from this post-war recording.





Above Leslie Howard as Reginald Joseph Mitchell.

Leslie Howard started to direct a film that would celebrate R J Mitchell, the designer of the Spitfire.

LESLIE HOWARD

Howard was a famous actor-director who had made his name on Broadway in the 1930s and had gone on to Hollywood, where he became a close friend of Humphrey Bogart, and played in, among other hits, *Gone With the Wind* (1939). He returned to Britain at the start of the war to do his bit. Two stalwarts of the British film industry, Miles Malleon and Anatole de Grunwald, wrote the script for the Mitchell film.

The Air Ministry read the script and saw the film as good propaganda, so they provided full support and made available a squadron of Spitfires for the use of the film-makers. They were filmed taking off, landing, and performing aerobatics at RAF Ibsley near the New Forest and at RAF Warmwell in Dorset. David Niven, who was working in America at the time, was released by Samuel Goldwyn from his contract at MGM to return to Britain to play the part of Group Captain Geoffrey Crisp. Leslie Howard himself played the role of R J Mitchell.

The film begins with newsreel scenes showing the German occupation of much of northern and western Europe. Hitler and Goering threaten that Britain will be the next country to be crushed by the Nazi jackboot. The film then moves to newsreel footage of RAF Fighter Command headquarters on 15 September 1940 as the controllers struggle to scramble the fighter squadrons while fleet after fleet of German raiders are picked up approaching the British coast.

Then, moving to an imaginary RAF airfield named Seafeld, a squadron of

Spitfires comes in to land after a heavy skirmish with the German bombers. The RAF pilots, some played by actors but others playing themselves, are full of the lingo used by airmen at the time. Downplaying the whole business, one of them describes the battle as 'Quite a picnic, sir!'

Relaxing for a few minutes they start to talk about the Spitfire with their station commander, Group Captain Geoffrey Crisp (David Niven). The pilots repeat all the mixed-up rumours about how the aircraft had been designed. 'It was designed in two hours at a golf club, wasn't it sir?' asks one. Crisp decides he has to tell the young pilots the full story of the birth of the Spitfire, and the film flashes back to the summer of 1922 to start its core narrative.

SCHNEIDER TROPHY

The film shows Howard playing R J Mitchell as a young aircraft designer at Supermarine, a small company in Southampton trying to design seaplane aircraft fast enough to win the Schneider Trophy, the international air-speed race. But Mitchell has a passion to produce a single-bodied streamlined aircraft based on his observation of how birds fly. He tells his old school friend, Geoffrey Crisp, 'I believe I've discovered the secret of real flying, the secret of the birds... not building something in parts and held together with wires, but one continuous body all in one piece.' ▸

Right A statue of Reginald Mitchell, designer of the Spitfire aeroplane, outside the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.

SCHNEIDER TROPHY

The Schneider Trophy competition was first held in 1913, and was intended to encourage innovation in aviation technology. During the 1920s it became a highly prestigious international air-speed race, held over a fixed distance across a lake or the sea. If a club or nation won the trophy three consecutive times, they were entitled to keep the cup permanently.

Among the winners were:

1922 – Britain's Supermarine Sea Lion, with a speed of 145mph

1923/1925 – America's Curtiss company, with speeds of 177mph and 232mph

1926 – Italy's Macchi M39 at 246mph

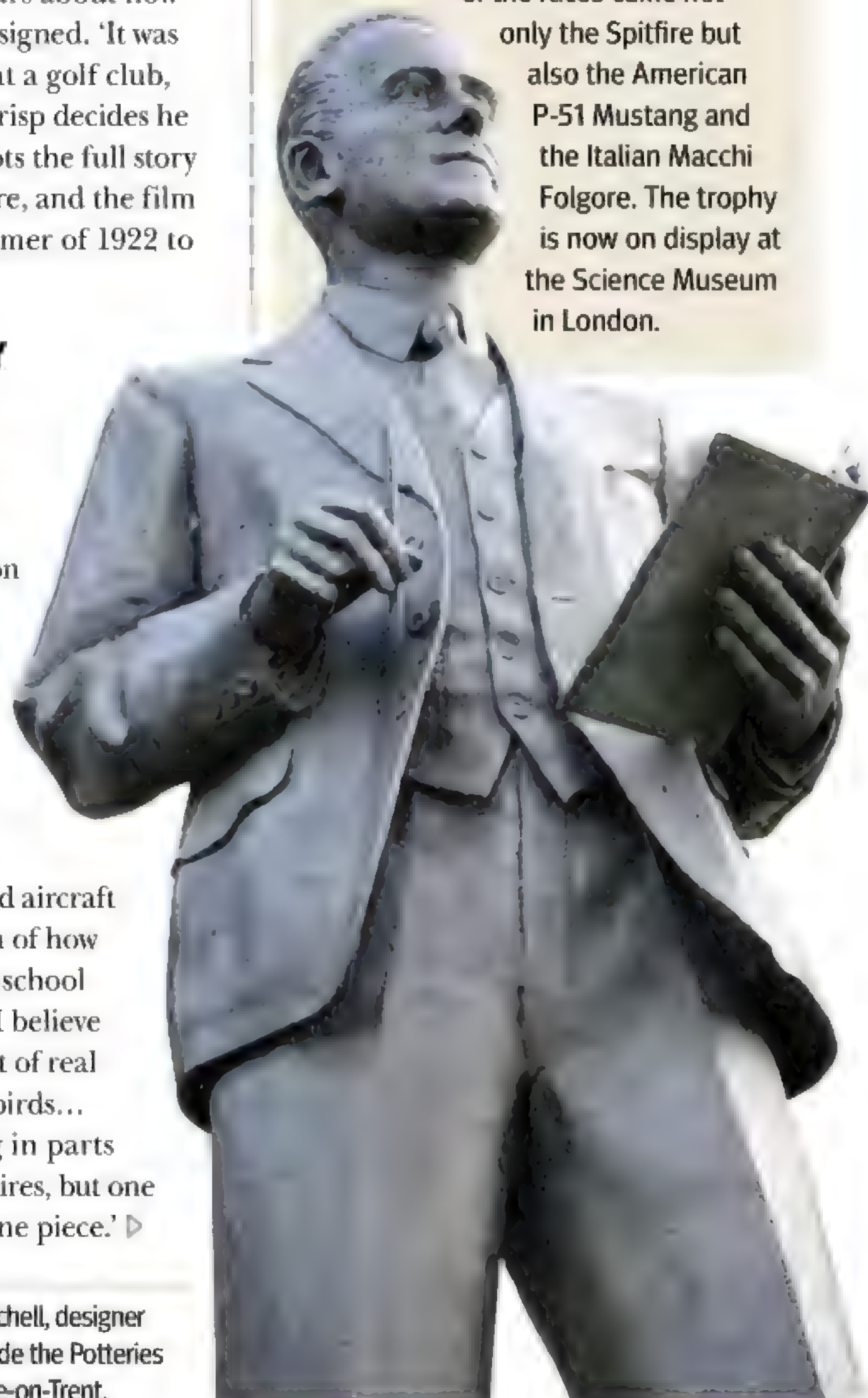
1927 – Supermarine, with Mitchell's S5 at 281mph

1929 – Supermarine, with Mitchell's S6 at 328mph

1931 – Supermarine, with Mitchell's S6B at 340mph

The Schneider races did much to stimulate improvements to engine performance and aerodynamics. Out of the races came not

only the Spitfire but also the American P-51 Mustang and the Italian Macchi Folgore. The trophy is now on display at the Science Museum in London.





Above David Niven in *The First of the Few*.

This obsession with designing an entirely new type of aircraft brings him into conflict with the board of directors at Supermarine, who want a more conventional biplane, and Mitchell resigns from the company. But the directors cave in and call

him back to work up his design. The consequence is a series of successes for Mitchell and Supermarine at the Schneider Cup. During this period the company is bought by Vickers, the big arms-manufacturing company, who are presented as bringing the capital and investment necessary to support Mitchell's new aircraft designs.

After winning the Schneider Cup for the third time, Mitchell is seen as a man without a mission, spending his time gardening. It is only when his friend Crisp takes him to Germany for a holiday that everything changes.

There, he attends a dinner at the Richthofen Club and meets Willy Messerschmitt, the German aircraft designer. The rather ham-fisted Nazis convince Mitchell that they are determined to win mastery of Europe, and he returns to England with a new passion: to design a fighter aircraft based on the streamlined design of his S6B to defend the country from the Luftwaffe. Drained of energy by an unnamed disease, Mitchell pushes himself to an early death, working all hours to complete the design of the Spitfire. On the day the Air Ministry finally confirm their order for hundreds of the aircraft, Mitchell, exhausted by the struggle, passes away.

THE REAL MITCHELL

The First of the Few takes many liberties with the truth. Although Leslie Howard plays Mitchell as a gentle, upper-middle-class romantic with a dream to design fast aircraft, he was, in reality, from a working-class background and had a fierce temper. The disease from which he suffered and in the end died was colon cancer, though this is never revealed in the film. In 1932 he had a major operation, and it was while convalescing that he visited Germany – but he never met Messerschmitt.

Mitchell's genius was to replace the wood, wire, and fabric of the conventional biplane with a stretched lightweight aluminium covering over a metal frame. And the elliptical wing



SPITFIRE VERSUS HURRICANE

There were twice as many Hurricanes as Spitfires available to the RAF in the summer of 1940 – 38 operational squadrons in July 1940, to 19 Spitfire squadrons.

The Hurricane, designed by another legendary aircraft designer, Sidney Camm, was of a much more conventional design and closer to the traditional biplane in conception. It consisted of an inner framework of metal tubes, braced with wires and covered in fabric. Consequently it was much easier and cheaper to build than the Spitfire.

Also powered by the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, the Hurricane was a practical, rugged, dependable fighter, but it lacked the good looks and the brilliance of the Spitfire. Hurricanes shot down more German aircraft than Spitfires, although that is partly due to the fact that they were ordered to attack the slow-moving Heinkel and Dornier bombers, while the Spitfires went for the faster fighter-escorts like the Messerschmitt Me 109 or the twin-engined Me 110.

Ever since the summer of 1940, there has been a debate about the different virtues of the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Hurricane – but there is no mention of the Hurricane in *The First of the Few*. Nonetheless, the reality is that the RAF needed both the super-fast Spitfire and the reliable Hurricane to win the Battle of Britain.

shape tapering to a point at the end gave the aircraft extra manoeuvrability. When this futuristic-looking airframe was combined with the new Rolls-Royce PV-12 engine, later known as the Merlin, Mitchell and his team were on to a winner.

But the process was desperately slow. There was no easy transition from the Schneider-winning S6B seaplane to the World War II fighter. Mitchell worked on his first design in 1931. The prototype, known only as K5054, first flew on 5 March 1936 at Eastleigh in Southampton. But it was slower than expected and there were several problems that needed to be ironed out. Mitchell, supported by his deputy Joe Smith, went back to the drawing board.

'A BLOODY SILLY NAME'

Supermarine decided to call the new aircraft the 'Spitfire'. Mitchell was not impressed, and is supposed to have commented caustically 'Sort of bloody silly name they would give it.'

In June 1936 the Air Ministry ordered 300 Spitfires (at the same time they ordered 600 Hurricanes). By now, Mitchell was seriously ill with his cancer and Joe Smith supervised most of the final tests and redesigns. Mitchell died, not as in the film on the day the order was confirmed, but a year later on 11 June 1937. He was aged only 42.

For Supermarine, the problems were only beginning. They were simply too small and too specialised to fulfil an order of this scale. So radical was the design for the Spitfire that new jigs had to be constructed and the use of new metals had to be learnt. Even with the backing of the giant armaments company Vickers, production of the Spitfire fell way behind schedule.

The fuselages were made in Southampton. The wings, which proved particularly difficult to mass produce, were subcontracted out. At one point there were 78 fuselages but only three sets of wings available in the assembly plant. Things got so bad that in June 1939 the Air Ministry considered abandoning production of the Spitfire altogether. Fortunately they did not, and there were just enough Spitfires in existence by the summer of 1940 for this beautiful, high-speed marvel of a flying machine to play its part in helping to win the Battle of Britain – and become the most legendary British aircraft of all time.

The part of Geoffrey Crisp, dramatically played by David Niven in *The*



THE FIRST OF THE FEW

The First of the Few was a British Aviation Pictures film, produced and directed by Leslie Howard, written by Miles Malleon and Anatole de Grunwald. It starred Leslie Howard as R J Mitchell, David Niven as Group Captain Geoffrey Crisp, and Rosamund John as Diana Mitchell. The music was composed by William Walton. In the United States, the film was released with the title *Spitfire*. The DVD is distributed by Deluxe Video Services as part of 'The Classic British Film Collection'.

Above The 1942 movie poster for *The First of the Few*.

First of the Few, is a composite character. Crisp becomes the test pilot for Mitchell's Schneider Trophy-winning seaplanes, and then an RAF fighter pilot. The principal test pilot for the Spitfire was, in fact, Jeffrey Quill. His early enthusiasm for the Spitfire did much to boost the confidence of Supermarine in their new fighter.

During the war Alex Henshaw was the chief test pilot at Supermarine, flying every mark of the aircraft produced. By 1949, although 24 different versions of the Spitfire had been manufactured, Mitchell's basic design principles remained, and more than 22,000 in total had been built.

At the height of the Battle of Britain, in September 1940, Goering called his Luftwaffe pilots together to discuss what was going wrong with their campaign to destroy the RAF. Partly because German intelligence constantly exaggerated the losses being inflicted on the RAF, the pilots were amazed when another squadron of British fighters was waiting in the skies over southern England to attack them.

Despairing, Goering turned to his pilots and asked what it was they needed to win the battle. Adolf Galland, one of the top Luftwaffe aces, replied immediately 'Spitfires!' It was a fitting tribute to R J Mitchell's classic fighter plane. Goering was not amused. ■■



Interview

CORRELLI BARNETT

Military History Monthly editor **Neil Faulkner** spoke to Correlli Barnett about his long career as a military historian and his new book *The Lords of War*.

You were never a professional soldier and you have never seen combat. You did three years National Service in 1945-1948 and finished up a sergeant. Can you explain how you became interested in military history, yet never wanted to pursue a military career?

I was a teenager during the war. I followed the North Africa campaign – as did lots of boys of my age – like others might the football league. There was lots of accessible news coverage, notably the illustrated war magazines, and there was this tremendous personality at the centre of it all, the German general Rommel. I was gripped.

I just missed the war and ended up doing post-war National Service, but by temperament I'm a rebel, not an organisation man, so the Forces really weren't for me. But military history was, and I specialised in it at Oxford, where you could take it as a Modern History option. (Modern History, by the way, means anything after AD 410 at Oxford!)

You were at Oxford from 1948 to 1951. Was that a formative experience?

You were offered a choice of Special Subjects: military history and the theory of war, or documents in the Puritan Revolution. Now there's a Grade A passion-killer. So I chose military history and the theory of war, and that meant in particular that I read Clausewitz for the first time. His three-volume treatise *On War* was the basis of the whole course, and yes, it was absolutely formative – the main foundation-block of everything I have done since.

What is the importance of Clausewitz compared with other military theorists?

The others don't deal with the fundamentals; they deal with details

of strategy and tactics. Clausewitz deals with the whole philosophy of war, the whole context in which wars take place, the relationships between war and politics and society.

Clausewitz's breadth of vision provided a context for the other thing that I think is crucial: technology, industry, mass production. Modern wars are total wars, not 'cabinet wars'; they are political acts that involve the commitment of the whole of the economy and society. This means they are full of passion. To mobilise people *en masse* you have to motivate them. So modern total wars are also wars of ideology.

Clausewitz understood all of this. That's not true of any of the other writers on war. He grasped that war is a political act – an extension of politics, not a tournament. And the more intense the political issue at stake, the more intense the war will be. So you can't understand war without looking at the whole of society.

In 1960 you earned a double-page spread in the *News of the World* headlined 'Monty is Massacred – by an ex-sergeant'. The subtitle ran 'A third-rate general who wasted lives at El Alamein because the battle wasn't necessary'. There was quite a rumpus. Can you say something about it?

Yes, I was also denounced from the platform at the Alamein veterans' annual reunion at the Albert Hall that year. I was the lowly National Service sergeant who had dared to criticise a field-marshal and war hero.

Monty had published his memoirs in 1958 and they were terribly unfair to other people, notably Auchinleck, who was in every sense a much bigger person, and Dorman-Smith, a staff-officer with a first-rate military brain.

Modern wars are total wars; they are political acts that involve the commitment of the whole of the economy and society. This means they are full of passion.



Above Correlli Barnett as portrayed in a *News of the World* cartoon on 3 September 1960 – a rare distinction for a military historian!

Both of them were scapegoated by Churchill.

Auchinleck was a model of restraint when Monty's memoirs came out, but he was prepared to give a young historian a chance and provide the support for a series of articles putting an alternative view. This came about through a mutual friend. The final result was *The Desert Generals*, the book that caused the storm.

The truth is that Monty was an able organiser of an industrial battle – and not much more. He was never more than an army or army group commander, so he always operated in a limited military sphere and never saw beyond his own narrow military remit. And he was a divisive force. You were either in his lobby or outside it.

Then there was the BBC TV series *The Great War* in 1964 – a watershed in TV military history. How did you come to be involved in that?

My involvement came via John Terraine, whom I knew. He was a BBC radio producer, but he had also just published his biography of Haig, so he was the in-house man in relation to the First World War. I had just published *The Swordbearers*, which deals with supreme command in the First World War. So we were the up-to-the-minute historians at that point, and the series was planned to coincide with the 50th anniversary, of course.

I should say, though, that the intellectual and creative powerhouse was the series producer Tony Essex. He was a voracious reader, a creative genius, and he wanted to make exciting film. His original template for the 26-part series is almost exactly what we ended up doing.

For me it was another new experience, because writing a TV script is completely different from writing a book. You have to learn a new grammar. The point is that you don't have to describe anything – mustn't describe anything – because the audience is looking at pictures. You have to write to the film – the words are subordinate to the images.

Why did you decide to write *The Lords of War*? What are the big ideas behind it?

It is a study – three years in the making – of what makes for good and poor leadership in different contexts. Lincoln found himself the leader in an appalling war, but he was largely ignorant of military affairs. Yet he had the capacity to learn faster than the generals, and also the flexibility, resolution, width of mind, and determination to see it through – and a wonderful, earthy sense of humour! He was a Clausewitzian figure.

The Elder Moltke, on the other hand, was brilliant in the narrowly military sphere. His masterly staff work, treating war like a gigantic game of chess, produced the victories that created modern Germany.

Sometimes your judgements seem wilfully mischievous – praising Haig, for example, and damning Napoleon.

What the critics don't take proper account of are the realities on the Western Front. I once confronted A J P Taylor on this – the 'lions led by donkeys' stuff – telling him that the reason there weren't more tanks was not that Haig didn't want them but that British industry couldn't produce them.

It was easy for people like Liddell Hart and J F C Fuller in the interwar period to denounce the First World War generals and claim that 'the indirect approach' or the proper use of technology would have made the difference. The simple facts were that the defence was dominant and you had to defeat the enemy's main army. Haig understood this – in a Clausewitzian sense – and crafted and commanded the modern mass army that eventually won the war.

As for Bonaparte... well, I'm not a mischief-maker, I'm a questioner. It's the historian's job to question the accepted version – especially when it is created by some like Bonaparte, the first great spin-doctor of modern times. Once he was rumbled by his opponents – either denying him the decisive battle he craved or continuing the fight even when that battle was lost – his system fell apart. He was always gambling on very narrow margins. He reminds me of a whizz-kid City gambler. ¹



Extract

from Correlli Barnett's *The Lords of War*

CRUSADER WITH A BLUNT SWORD:

Abraham Lincoln and his generals



Left Though a civilian politician, Abraham Lincoln is rated an outstanding 'lord of war' in Correlli Barnett's new study.

for the chief to show great energy of purpose in the pursuit of his object. But as soon as difficulties arise – and that must always happen when great results are at stake – then things no longer move on of themselves like a well-oiled machine, the machine itself begins to offer resistance, and to overcome this the commander must have a great deal of force of will. As the moral forces in one individual after another become prostrated, the whole inertia of the mass gradually rests its weight on the will of the commander. By the spark in his breast, by the light of his spirit, the spark of purpose, the light of hope, must be kindled afresh in others.

Lincoln and military theory

What qualities did Lincoln bring to the task of conducting the first modern war? Unlike Churchill in 1940, he had no previous experience as a member of a wartime administration. Unlike Churchill again, he had never taken a deep interest in military and naval history. His background was wholly civilian except for brief service as a young man in the Illinois militia against the Indians.

Nonetheless, Lincoln had been formed by the pioneering spirit of the American frontier; he had been schooled in a hard early life where what counted was commonsensical ability to sort out practical problems. The rough-and-tumble of small-town lawyering and local politics had further matured his natural sagacity and good judgement. Though his formal education had been limited, he was well-read, mining from books the material useful to him. He was physically and mentally tough, and blessed with an earthy sense of humour that could help to lighten the grimmest moments of setback.

Above all, he possessed that weight of character, that strength of will which are absolutely essential to a supreme commander, as Clausewitz explains:

As long as his men, full of courage, fight with zeal and spirit, it is seldom necessary

This quotation perfectly applies to Lincoln during the disappointments and disasters to the Union cause in the first two years of the Civil War.

Lincoln and McClellan

The relationship between Lincoln and McClellan fell into a pattern that lasted until Lincoln finally sacked him in November 1862. The pattern was this: Lincoln, the civilian, had grasped that the only way to defeat the Confederacy was to engage its armies – and especially Lee's Army of Northern Virginia – in remorseless battles that would bleed their strength away. But McClellan, the soldier, shrank from so grim a course, pleading again and again that he was not ready to take the offensive; that he was outnumbered; that he must have reinforcements; that he would move as soon as he had reinforcements.

Instead of the direct invasion of Virginia via the town of Manassas urged on him by Lincoln, McClellan wanted to adopt a strategy of the indirect approach (to use the term beloved of Basil Liddell Hart, a plausible charlatan of a military writer). He proposed to embark the Army of the Potomac, land it at the top of the Peninsula that lies between the James and the York River, and take

Richmond, the Confederate capital, by the side door.

Despite his misgivings, Lincoln agreed. The landings duly took place; and slowly, cautiously, and laboriously, McClellan moved up the Peninsula, whining all the time about his difficulties. In a highly revealing remark, he said that his capture of two towns without fighting – in fact evacuated by the enemy – would be regarded by history as his 'brightest chaplets' because the towns were won without loss of life. Meanwhile, the Confederate forces simply regrouped to block his route to Richmond.

Lincoln himself sent McClellan a devastating indictment of this strategy of evasion: an indictment which indeed applies today to the whole concept of 'the indirect approach', or 'manoeuvre warfare'. This is what he wrote:

...let me tell you, it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help you. You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field instead of fighting near Manassas was only shifting, and not surmounting, a difficulty – that we should find the same enemy, and same or equal entrenchments, at either place. The country will not fail to note – is now noting – that the present hesitation to move upon an entrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.

Lincoln and grand strategy

To this novel question [the formulation of a grand strategic design for winning the war] he had applied his practical mind as soon as the war began. His first plan had been to secure Washington from attack, blockade the ports of the Confederacy, and then attack Charleston, South Carolina. This really was cigar-butt strategy, because there were neither armies nor shipping nor warships in enough quantity to carry it out. What was more, he left out the Western theatre astride the Mississippi. Winfield Scott [the army general-in-chief] responded with what became known as the 'Anaconda Plan': blockade of the Atlantic coast of the Confederacy while moving an

Lincoln came up with a fresh strategic concept: one which showed how fast his practical mind could learn.

army of 60,000 men down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, so sealing off the South and killing it by the slow economic squeeze.

Lincoln, however, wanted a quicker, more active method of crushing the rebellion; so invasion and battle it had to be. But he picked up one major concept from Winfield Scott and never let it go – the concept of clearing the line of the Mississippi, so cutting the Confederacy in two.

Lincoln's next immediate operational plan was for a direct drive on Richmond via the railway junction of Manassas. He hoped that the fall of their capital might induce the Confederacy to pack it in. But here too he was being naïve; the Confederacy, having gone to war for causes desperately dear to it, was not going to surrender after one lost campaign. Anyway, McDowell's defeat at First Bull Run put an end to the plan, at least for another two years.

After First Bull Run, Lincoln came up with a fresh strategic concept: one which showed how fast his practical mind could learn. This time the concept encompassed the whole war rather than just one theatre. In the Eastern theatre (that is, Virginia), there would now be a major drive on Richmond via Manassas with fresh armies now to be raised. In the theatre west of the Alleghenies, there would be twin offensives, from Cairo on the Mississippi south towards Memphis, and from Cincinnati south into Tennessee. Meanwhile the Confederacy would be economically weakened by blockade.

Here was foreshadowed the grand strategy that finally won the war in 1864-1865.

Lincoln and Grant

On being appointed general-in-chief in March 1864, Grant had discussed the Union's future strategy with Lincoln, and afterwards drafted the plan on which the war was finally won. No documentary

evidence exists to establish how far the plan should be credited to Grant and how far to Lincoln. Nonetheless, its architecture has more in common with Lincoln's thinking than with Grant's own earlier ideas.

The plan was based on the concept of concurrent interrelated offensives pressing concentrically on the Confederacy, so as to pin down and destroy the outnumbered Confederate armies.

In the East, Meade, in command of the Army of the Potomac, was to make Lee's army his one objective. He was instructed: 'Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also.' In the West, General William Sherman was to launch an offensive from Chattanooga eastwards to Atlanta in Georgia. However, his true objective, like Meade's, was to engage the enemy army opposite him and destroy it. Sherman was further directed to lay waste the war resources of the country along his line of advance. A third offensive starting from New Orleans was to take Mobile and perhaps later link up with Sherman...

At last the Union had a clear plan, a clear command organisation, and, in Grant, a general-in-chief of proven capability. And Lincoln at last had a commander he could trust to get on with it. In return, Grant comprehended Lincoln's political problems better than his predecessors.

In May 1864, just as Grant was preparing to launch the first of a series of bloody battles of attrition in Virginia, he received the following letter from the president:

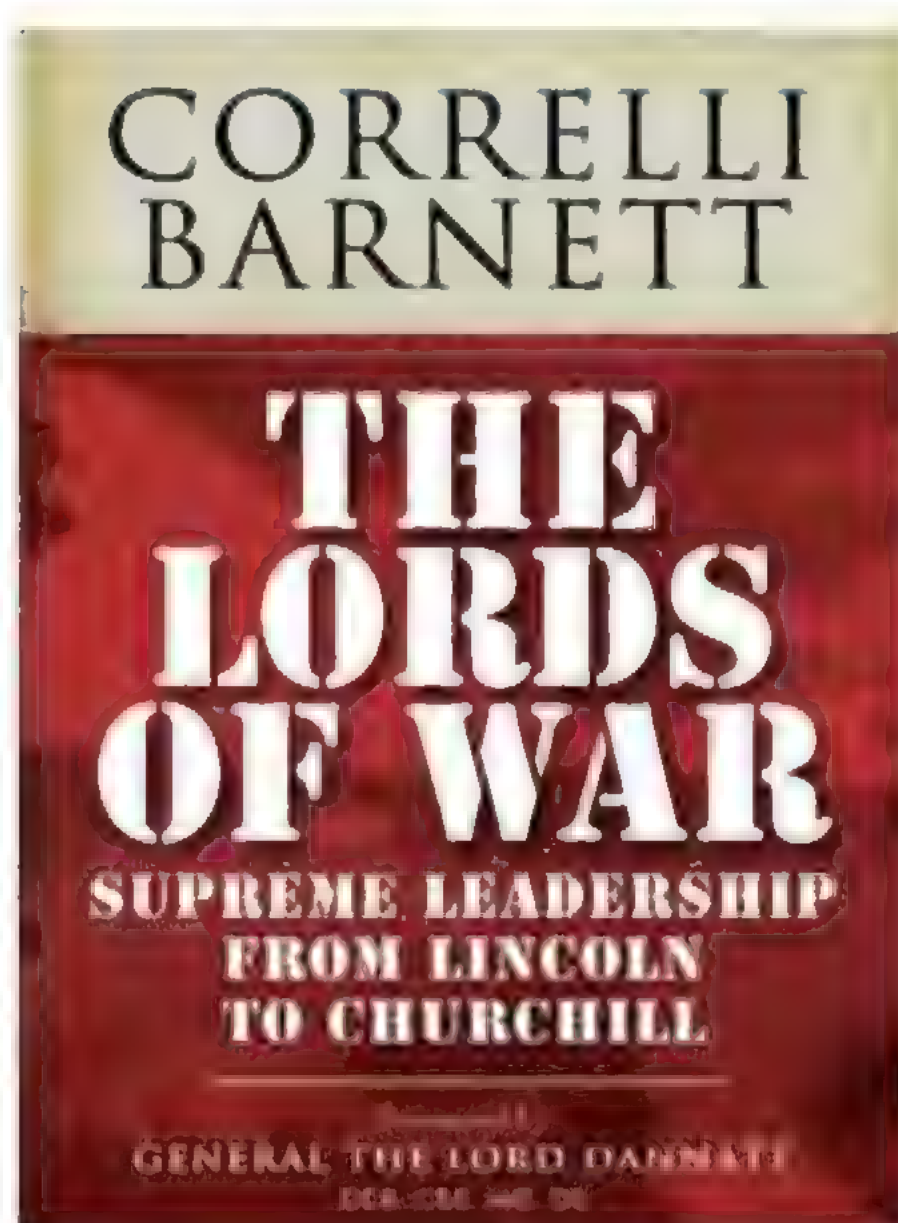
The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant, and pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which it is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know. And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Below Not least among Lincoln's achievements was his firm support for the rising military star Ulysses Simpson Grant. 'I can't spare this man,' Lincoln said; 'he fights.' It was the partnership between Lincoln and Grant that finally delivered victory in the American Civil War.



CORRELLI BARNETT

Book review



Correlli Barnett
Pen & Sword, £25
ISBN 978-1781590935

The secret of leadership lies not in managing “human resources”, but in cherishing human relationships.’ So says Correlli Barnett in the introduction to his new book, which judges afresh the attainments of 20 top leaders in war. The book marks the culmination of a lifetime’s study of military leadership in action.

The critical insight here is that the successful commander is the one who most effectively embodies the all-round demands of the specific military situation in which he finds himself, and who can then motivate numerous others to perform the tasks necessary to meet these demands. So there is no single formula. Successful leadership turns out to be as diverse in character as the military situations that call it forth.

There is, for example, a fascinating comparison between Lee and Grant, the two greatest commanders of the American Civil War, who were, of course, pitched head-to-head in the gruelling campaigns in the Eastern theatre in the final year of the conflict. Lee lacked grand-strategic grasp because he was essentially a Virginian patriot fighting for his state – a case of extraordinary political myopia given the great issues that had been convulsing the nation for a decade and had finally detonated the

most terrible war in US history. Lee, in other words, conceived the war in terms of personal loyalties.

Grant could not have been more different. It was not simply that he was low-born, unpretentious, and easy-going, while Lee was a planter-aristocrat to his finger-tips; it was also that Grant could see the war in all its vast import and scale. He drew the inevitable conclusion: it was a war of relentless attrition, fuelled by ideological passion, to destroy the Old South. And that was how he fought it. It was his colleague William Sherman who said ‘all war is hell’, but Grant made it so no less.

With reference to the great summer campaign of 1864 in the Eastern theatre, Barnett writes: ‘Grant had indeed inaugurated a new era in the history of warfare: continuous fighting contact between armies that lasted for month after month, and swelled from time to time into major collisions given the title “battles”. As for Lee, he conducted a tactical defensive within his trench systems with skill and determination. In contrast, Grant and Meade’s own attacks were often tactically clumsy and sometimes botched in execution. It did not matter, for Grant never loosened his grip on his opponent and never gave him an opening.’

Lee represented a doomed social order based on cotton plantations and human slavery. Grant was the military expression of a dynamic new society based on factories, steamships, railroads, and westward expansion. This is what raises Grant so much higher than Lee.

Or take as another example Moltke the Elder, the architect of the modern German army and of victory in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. Barnett calls him ‘the calculator of victory’. He conducted war as a scientific operation, subject to meticulous planning and preparation, with the supreme commander’s role essentially that of managing an extensive general staff and ensuring effective overall co-ordination of the movements of mass armies. But however detailed and thorough the staff-work, it was always in service to the simplest of plans.

Moltke, like Grant, embodied the zeitgeist of his age and place – in his case, a welding together of traditional Prussian militarism with the guns, railways, and telegraphs of the Industrial Revolution.

Marshal Joffre, the French commander on the Western Front in 1914-1916, is another singled out for praise. Ox-like in appearance, habits, lack of imagination, perhaps even lack of intelligence, and certainly in his slow, plodding mode of work, what was decisive in the crisis of August-September 1914 was the almost serene calm and confidence with which he managed his army. Everything went wrong in that campaign, yet Joffre remained firm, becoming an immovable pillar of steadfastness around which events in due course turned.

As Barnett describes it: ‘So the issue of the Battle of the Marne now hung in the balance. In the coming days, that would not be tipped on the battlefield, where the German armies might well have prevailed over their opponent. It would be tipped instead at the level of supreme command, where Joffre was displaying calmly resolute leadership and Moltke [the Younger] was suffering a nervous collapse.’

Military genius, it seems, is not a personal attribute; it is a dialectical relationship between man and moment. Genius is simply leadership that is perfectly attuned and wholly effective in the specific circumstances given.

Grant had inaugurated a new era in warfare: continuous fighting contact between armies that lasted for month after month.

It is this insight that enables Barnett to rehabilitate a general like Douglas Haig. 'The fact is that the scapegoaters of Haig were, and are, intellectual cowards who shrink from confronting the intractable political and strategic dilemmas posed by the war.' These dilemmas centred on the centrality of the Western Front and the impenetrability of the German defences. They centred on the fact that a modern industrialised war of attrition – to destroy the enemy's powers of resistance – is precisely that: a war of attrition. Gettysburg and Stalingrad were also battles of attrition, and American losses in 1861-1865 and Russian losses in 1941-1945 were proportionately greater than British losses in 1914-1918.

And it was Haig, of course, who won the First World War: 'the final campaign on the Western Front can fairly be regarded as a contest of leadership between Haig, the imperturbable Lowland Scot, and Ludendorff, the highly strung Prussian. In this contest, Haig quickly asserted a dominance of will which he was never to lose.'

Many other commanders are the subject of trenchant essays in this book: Bonaparte, Lincoln, Napoleon III, Moltke the Younger, Lloyd George, Marshal Pétain, Ludendorff, Erwin Rommel, Admiral Yamamoto, Bill Slim, 'Bomber' Harris, Admiral Ramsay, Eisenhower, Marshal Zhukov, Hitler, and Churchill. Each is packed with insight, and many are to be treasured for the gauntlet thrown down before received wisdom. Most challenging is the author's return to a theme first explored in his *Bonaparte* in 1978.

Rejecting the idea that Napoleon represents some sort of supreme model of military genius, Barnett argues the very reverse. 'The consequences of Napoleon Bonaparte's wars, entirely unforeseen by him, are easily stated: the destruction of his self-built empire, and the lasting reduction of France from the superpower of Europe to a country in long-term decline, while he himself ended his career not as Emperor of the French but as a prisoner of England on St Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic.' For this there is a simple explanation: 'he was

not a political and military genius at all, but an overconfident gambler pursuing from start to finish a fundamentally unsound system of war and statecraft.'

True to form, Barnett has produced another outstanding study – one which uproots lazy assumptions, offers sharp new insights, and forces the reader to think anew about what it is that makes for a great commander. Strongly recommended to all military-history enthusiasts. **00**

Below One of history's most overrated generals? That, at least, is Correlli Barnett's judgement on Napoleon – or 'Bonaparte' as he prefers to call him – in this trenchant study of supreme command over the last two centuries of war.

Napoleon was an overconfident gambler pursuing from start to finish a fundamentally unsound system of war and statecraft.





With hundreds of military museums in the UK alone, how do you know which one will best suit your interests? Here, **MHM** has picked some of the best museums and exhibitions to visit this year, from hidden gems to long-established sites.



Fleet Air Arm Museum

A day at the Fleet Air Arm Museum is guaranteed to thrill the whole family. You will be up close and personal with Europe's largest collection of naval aircraft, have the chance to step on board the first British Concorde, and see the cockpit.

The museum takes you to the heart of the action within the amazing Aircraft Carrier Experience. The sonic and visual assault on the senses is breath-taking. You will 'fly' by helicopter to the replica flight-deck of the HMS *Ark Royal*. Among the aircraft are two large projection screens showing a Phantom and Buccaneer taking off and landing around you.

You can even witness a dramatic air sea rescue when a Buccaneer is lost overboard on the *Ark Royal*.

There is a children's playground outside, a restaurant, shop, free parking, and excellent disabled access.

More than a museum, The Fleet Air Arm Museum is an exciting experience revealing the history of naval aviation. Situated alongside Europe's busiest military air station, you may even see military aircraft going through their training procedures.



WHERE: RNAS Yeovilton Somerset, BA22 8HT
OPENING TIMES: 10am-5.30pm
CONTACT: 01935 842638
www.fleetairarm.com

Bentwaters Cold War Museum

The Bentwaters Cold War Museum (BCWM) opened its doors to the public for the first time in May 2007. This was the culmination of a project that had begun six years before.

The original idea was for a room in the control tower to be set aside for memorabilia and photos, but this idea was subsequently changed to something that was on a much larger scale. The new plan saw the former hardened Wing Command Post as the base for the museum, a building that itself has a very interesting history.

The main 'war operations room' and 'Battle cabin' have been restored to their original condition. The BT telephone exchange room, decontamination showers, and air-lock are also as original. Other rooms within the building have been turned into exhibition rooms covering the history of RAF Bentwaters from WWII to the base's closure in 1993.

WHERE: Building 134, Bentwaters Parks, Rendlesham, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 2TW
OPENING TIMES: The first and third Sundays and Bank Holiday Sundays and Mondays, open from 10am-4pm, Easter-October inclusive.
CONTACT: 07588 877020
info@bcwm.org.uk
www.bcwm.org.uk

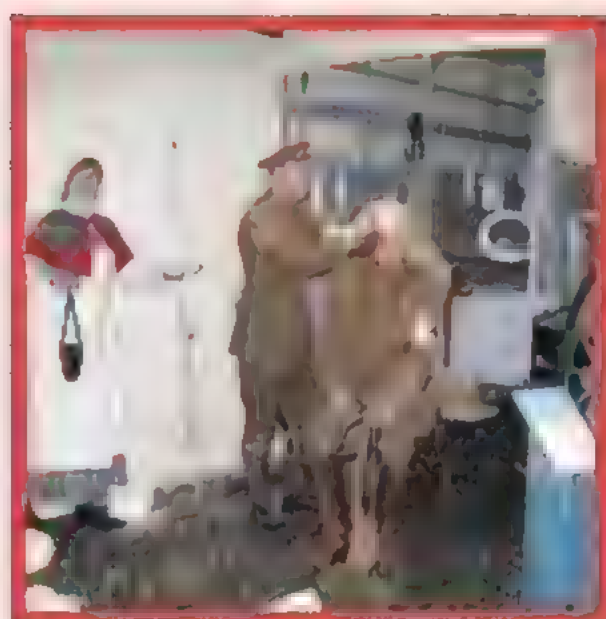
Army Medical Services Museum

The AMS Museum tells the story of how the British Army has affected the history of medicine and health care since the English Civil Wars. It does this through the use of life-sized dioramas and displays featuring medical

equipment, uniforms, badges and medals, and personal artefacts.

It houses an extensive archive and library featuring many important papers concerning the history of military medicine, nursing, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. There is also a unique display of 23 Victoria Crosses including a VC and Bar to a military doctor.

WHERE: Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot GU12 5RQ
OPENING TIMES: 9am-3.30pm (Mon - Fri)
CONTACT: 01252 868612
armymedicalmuseum@btinternet.com
www.ams-museum.org.uk



Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo

The Museum is located in the fortifications that were built in 1874 to reinforce France's coastal defence. Bastion 32 served as the headquarters for the French and Allied forces during the Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo. The *Memorial Du Souvenir* tells an incredible story of the battle and the evacuation of more than 338,000 allied soldiers from the pocket of Dunkirk.

The museum boasts a rich exhibition of maps and pictures, as well as both Allied and German military materiel. Scale models of the sites and of the operation, uniforms, and weapons complete the impressive collection.

Visiting the museum will also offer you the opportunity to see a 15-minute-long film using dramatic period footage. This film gives visitors an exciting overall view of the events which took place between May and June 1940.

WHERE: Courtines du Bastion 32, Rue des Chantiers de France, 59140 Dunkerque, A16 exit 60.

OPENING TIMES: 1st April - 30th September, 10am-12pm, 2pm-6pm

CONTACT: +33 (0)3 28262731
production@ot-dunkerque.fr
www.dynamo-dunkerque.com

Museum of Army Flying

The Museum of Army Flying is home to a unique collection of aviation history of national and international importance. Explore over 35 incredible aircraft from WWI to the present day.

Inside the museum a world of hidden treasures is waiting to be explored. You can delve into the rich history, heroic feats, and personal stories of extraordinary aviators, or get to grips with the hi-tech world of attack helicopters.

The museum offers everyone an experience that is educational as well as enjoyable. We provide knowledge about and understanding of events, people, and changes in the past. For schools, Cubs, Scouts, and cadets the museum provides bespoke and unique learning programmes outside the classroom (email education@flying-museum.org.uk for more information).

We also host an exciting range of events throughout the year, from family days to specialist lecture series.

WHERE? Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 8DY

OPENING TIMES
10am-4.30pm daily.
www.armyflying.com



The Royal Engineers Museum

The Royal Engineers Museum, Library, and Archive holds a vast collection of objects covering the long and varied history of the Corps of Royal Engineers. The Corps have been involved in every conflict of the British Army across every Continent. The museum is currently hosting a small number of temporary exhibitions.

Hidden Histories of Exploration, running from 19 January-1 April, offers a new perspective on the Society's Collections, highlighting the role of local inhabitants and intermediaries in the history of exploration.

The 8th Corridor, from 22 April-30 September, will allow visitors to learn about conservation of museum artefacts and learn more about how a museum audit works. This exhibition will also be a great opportunity to see some of the objects from our stores that are never normally on display.

There are always plenty of fun things for families to do as you visit the museum galleries.

Hands-on experiences, dressing-up, interactive displays, and trails will all make sure you have an enjoyable and memorable visit.

WHERE: Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG

OPENING TIMES: Tuesday to Friday 9am - 5pm (closed Mondays) Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays: 11.30am-5.00pm (last entry 4.00pm)

CONTACT: 01634 822839
www.re-museum.co.uk

MUSEUM GUIDE

LECHFELD

Otto the Great

THE BATTLE OF LECHFELD,
& THE FIRST GERMAN REICH



Jack Watkins recalls the great early Medieval ruler in whose footsteps Bismarck, the Kaiser, and Hitler would one day march.

Illustration by David Johnson

The military strongmen of early Medieval Europe are easy enough to name: Charlemagne, Otta, Alfred the Great, Eric Bloodaxe, Canute, William the Conqueror – the names trip off the tongue. Otto I, known as ‘the Great’, is less familiar to English-speaking audiences, on the other hand; yet he was an inspirational leader on the battlefield and, as the founder of the First German *Reich* – comprising

LECHFELD



Above This illuminated manuscript painting of the 9th century AD depicts Christian feudal knights engaging Eastern horse-archers. The clash between Teuton and Magyar was a clash between two different military systems and ways of war, the former based on mounted shock action, the latter on mounted missile-shooting.

Germany, Italy, and Lorraine – he fully merits a place in such august company.

From the moment he succeeded his father, Henry Fowler, as king in AD 936, Otto seemed intent on defining the image of what a Medieval monarch should be. After his succession was acknowledged by the German dukes, he was crowned and anointed by the Bishop of Mainz, receiving royal

unction to emphasise the sacral element of his rule.

The ceremony took place at Aachen, in the court chapel of Charlemagne, reinforcing the link with Frankish Christian traditions. Otto not only placed bishops at the heart of government, but had them play a leading role in his expansive *Drang nach Osten* policy ('Drive to the East'), hammering home the impression of him as a missionary ruler.

His ultimate reward would come in AD 962, when Pope John XII crowned him Holy Roman Emperor in St Peter's, Rome, reviving an imperial title which had fallen into disuse but would henceforward be held by German monarchs for centuries.

Yet it was the Battle of the River Lech in AD 955, in which he annihilated the flying horsemen from the east, the Magyars, that truly cemented his reputation as a formidable military operator.

The menace of the fast-moving, plundering barbarian was a recurring nightmare for the peoples of Western Europe between the last days of Rome on into the 10th century. From the north came the Vikings, from the south the Moors, and from the east nomadic horsemen in the shape of the Huns and the Avars. The Magyars were the latest manifestation of this 'eastern terror', first appearing across the borders of Germany in the AD 860s after settling on



The Teutonic foot-soldiers were easy fodder for skilled Magyar bowmen on small, swift, agile horses.

the Hungarian plain. From the AD 890s, their raids were increasingly noted for their relentless intensity.

The Magyar hordes

Like the Vikings, the Magyars' essential object was acquiring booty, not land, and they pounced on poorly defended borders in lightning manoeuvres, catching their prey unawares, and carrying off only what could be borne by the pack-horses of their small raiding parties. 'They went not in one mass, but in small bands', wrote the chronicler Ekkehard in AD 926, '...spoiling the farms and villages and setting fire to them... they always caught the inhabitants unawares by the swiftness of their appearance. Often a hundred of them or less would come galloping out of the wood on to their prey.'

The Magyars' refusal to stand and fight in pitched battle made them an elusive enemy, and for years they profited from the relatively unsophisticated nature of the military defences of Saxony, Thuringia, and Bavaria, along with the paucity of these duchies' supply of trained cavalymen. The foot-soldiers who comprised the bulk of the armies of the principalities were easy fodder for skilled Magyar bowmen on small, swift, agile horses.

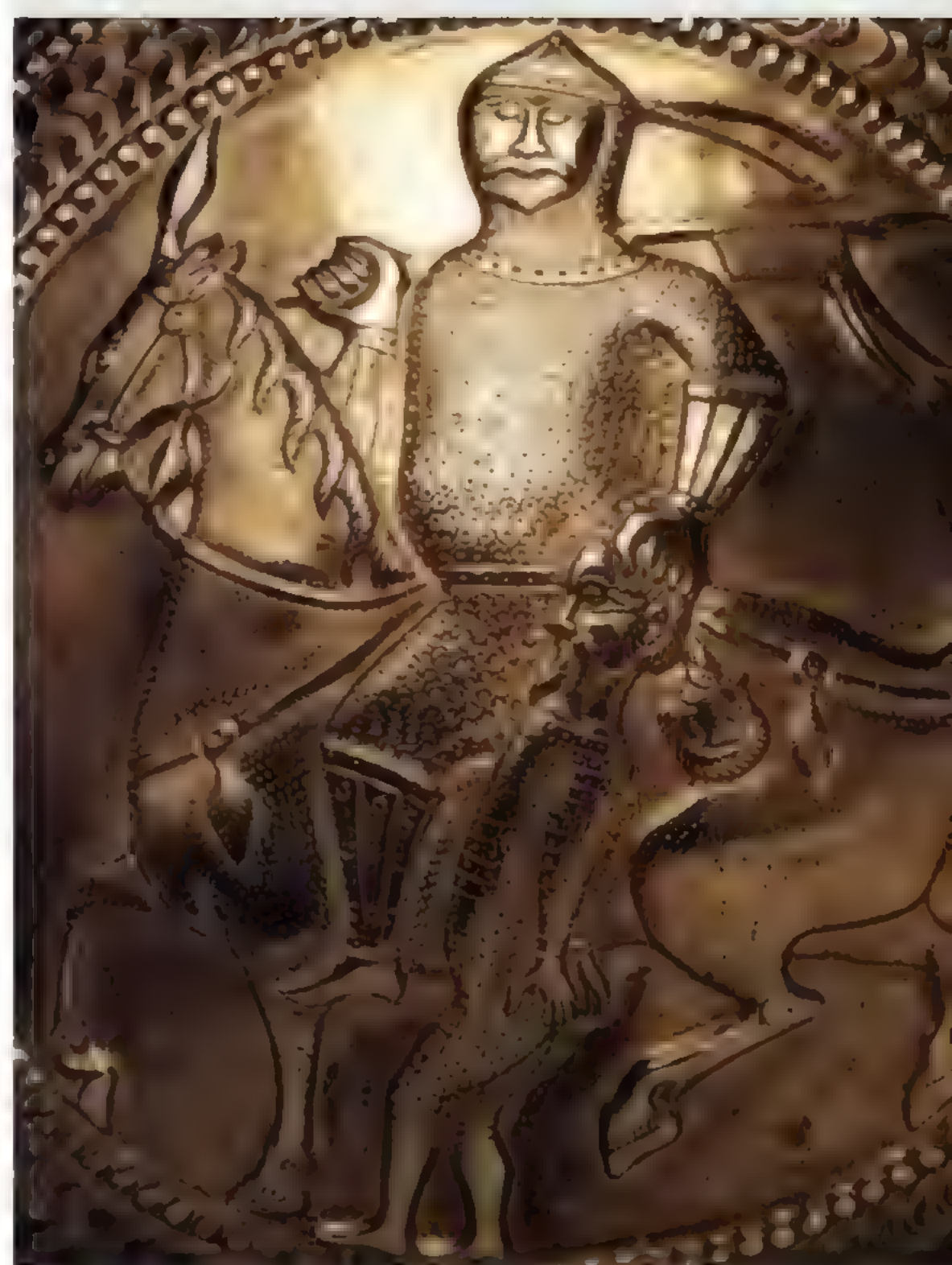
But they ranged far beyond these eastern territories. One of their most devastating attacks occurred in AD 924, when they swarmed through Bavaria and Swabia, crossed the Rhine, and attacked Alsace and Lorraine, before penetrating France as far inland as Champagne. After this they turned east again at the Ardennes, returning across Franconia to their homelands around the Danube.

Henry Fowler

During the course of this campaign, Henry Fowler had captured a Magyar princeling, enabling him to negotiate a truce whereby, in return for the payment of a tribute, the Magyars would desist from raiding for nine years.

Henry used this period of peace to bolster his defences, winning co-operation at last from a German nobility weary of decades of looting. The creation of a string of new fortifications defended by local levies, and the creation of a crack force of well-armed and armoured cavalymen, encouraged an increasingly confident Henry to refuse to pay the tribute in AD 932.

When this provoked a Magyar invasion the following year, a landmark victory ►



WARRIORS | THE MAGYARS

The greatest strengths of the Magyars were mobility and range. As steppe warriors, forever on the move, they were skilled horsemen unencumbered by much armour, and their steeds were noted for their placidity, endurance, and agility. Being essentially grass-fed, these horses enabled the Magyars to cover great distances at speed, since they did not need the supply trains of conventional armies on the march.

Skilled in reconnaissance, and highly adaptable, units of Magyar warriors could break down into smaller bands of barely a dozen men to sniff out easy looting opportunities in poorly defended communities, returning rapidly to the main party with the news. Speed also meant they could beat a fast retreat when a situation became unfavourable.

The main Magyar weapon was the composite bow, capable of creating havoc in enemy lines at ranges up to 300 metres or more. The preferred scene of engagement was open country, where they could hover around the enemy in swarms, showering them with missiles, creating disarray and demoralisation. Once gaps had opened in the opponent's lines, they would close in for the kill – though they usually avoided hand-to-hand combat because their lightweight sabres were essentially slashing weapons, and they were likely to be at a disadvantage against the better armoured armies of the West.

One of their favoured tactics was the feigned retreat, a ruse of steppe armies since the time of the Parthians. Mounted horsemen would scatter as if in flight, only to swivel around in the saddle and launch flurries of arrows over their shoulders – the famed 'Parthian shot'.

Wet weather was not in the Magyars' favour, however, since bows had a tendency to become unglued in damp conditions, rendering them ineffective. Rain before the battle at Lechfeld in AD 955 may have contributed to their defeat.

was achieved at the unknown location of Riade in northern Thuringia, when the spectacle of charging mail-clad heavy cavalry had caused the lightly armoured Magyars to flee without putting up a serious fight.

If the Magyar raids became less potent from that point, Otto, Henry's successor, still found himself having to drive back attacks on Franconia and Swabia in AD 938, as he continued his father's policy of withholding tribute. The Magyars, moreover, viewed an increasingly bullish Germany as a potential menace to their own territories in the Carpathian Basin. The campaigns they mounted in AD 954-955 may be seen as the last Magyar bid to despoil the land of their enemy, and administer a check on its rising power, before it was too late.

Magyar offensive

The initial opportunity arose out of a revolt by Liudolf of Swabia, Otto's son, and Conrad the Red of Lotharingia, his son-in-law. Sweeping through much of Germany in AD 954, the Magyars crossed into France and raided as far as Aquitaine. Otto, distracted by his battles with his nobles, had been powerless to locate them.

The AD 954 campaign, in view of the vast amount of ground covered, might appear to be yet another example of the far-ranging danger represented by the Magyars. But, in fact, it showed the growing ineffectiveness of warfare waged by mounted archers alone. While they enjoyed traditional booty-accumulating success when they came across undefended villages, the moment the Magyars met stiffer resistance at fortified settlements they were forced to move swiftly on.

Lesson learnt, when the campaign was renewed the following year, an army in the region of 50,000 was augmented by a large contingent of peasant infantry. Invading Bavaria, and equipped with

war engines and ladders, they deployed new tactics as they laid siege to the city of Augsburg.

Calculating that Otto's army would be debilitated after months of warring against internal dissidents, the Magyars hoped to ambush him *en route* to relieve the city, or, failing that, to lure him into giving battle on the open plains around the Lech River. Here, the old Magyar tactic of launching their arrow attacks from a distance before moving in to exploit their opponent's disarray could be used to best effect.

The Magyars,
struck dumb with
the terror, were
trapped between
our men, who
cut them down.

Otto received news of the Magyars' return at his court in Magdeburg in July AD 955 via a message from his loyal brother, Henry, Duke of Bavaria: 'Beware, Magyar war-bands, fanning out, have attacked across your frontier, and they have resolved to do battle with you.'

But the tidings had not taken him entirely by surprise. Only days before, a Magyar delegation had visited him, ostensibly to 'renew their prior loyalty and goodwill', according to the chronicler Widukind of Corvey in his *Deeds of the Saxons*, but in reality, as his advisers had been quick to point out, to size up the German state of preparedness to fight.

Otto's army

So Otto, with characteristic decisiveness, 'as if he had done nothing all the preceding year, set out against the enemy immediately,' said Widukind, 'taking with him only a few Saxons...'. He was eventually joined by contingents under the command of Duke Burchard III from Swabia, further units from Bavaria and Franconia, and an army of Bohemians under Prince Boleslav.

All the while the citizens of Augsburg were putting up a stout defence of the city under the brave and able leadership of Bishop Ulrich, who directed the resistance unarmoured. An unsuccessful attempt to storm the east gate was beaten down, and this and news of Otto's advance led the Magyars to draw back onto the banks of the Lech.

Otto now received a psychological boost with the arrival at his side of Conrad the Red. Having taken part in the rebellion of the previous year, which had seen him forfeit his ducal title, Conrad had a reputation to restore, and he was an able soldier. 'Conrad was by nature a brave spirit,' reported Widukind, 'and, what is rarer still in bold men, he was of good counsel, invincible in battle whether he went into the fray on horseback or on foot, and at home or on campaign he really cared for his men.'

Conrad also brought with him a unit of skilled equestrians from Franconia, strengthening the retinues of heavy cavalrymen in Otto's ranks. At the head of an army of about 10,000 men, Otto was now ready to press onwards towards the Lech, confident that he could not merely contain the enemy, but now had the power to deliver a possible knockout blow.

The attack on the baggage-train

Having established camp upriver from the Magyars on the evening of 9 August, the German army advanced through the woodlands of the Rauherforst the ►

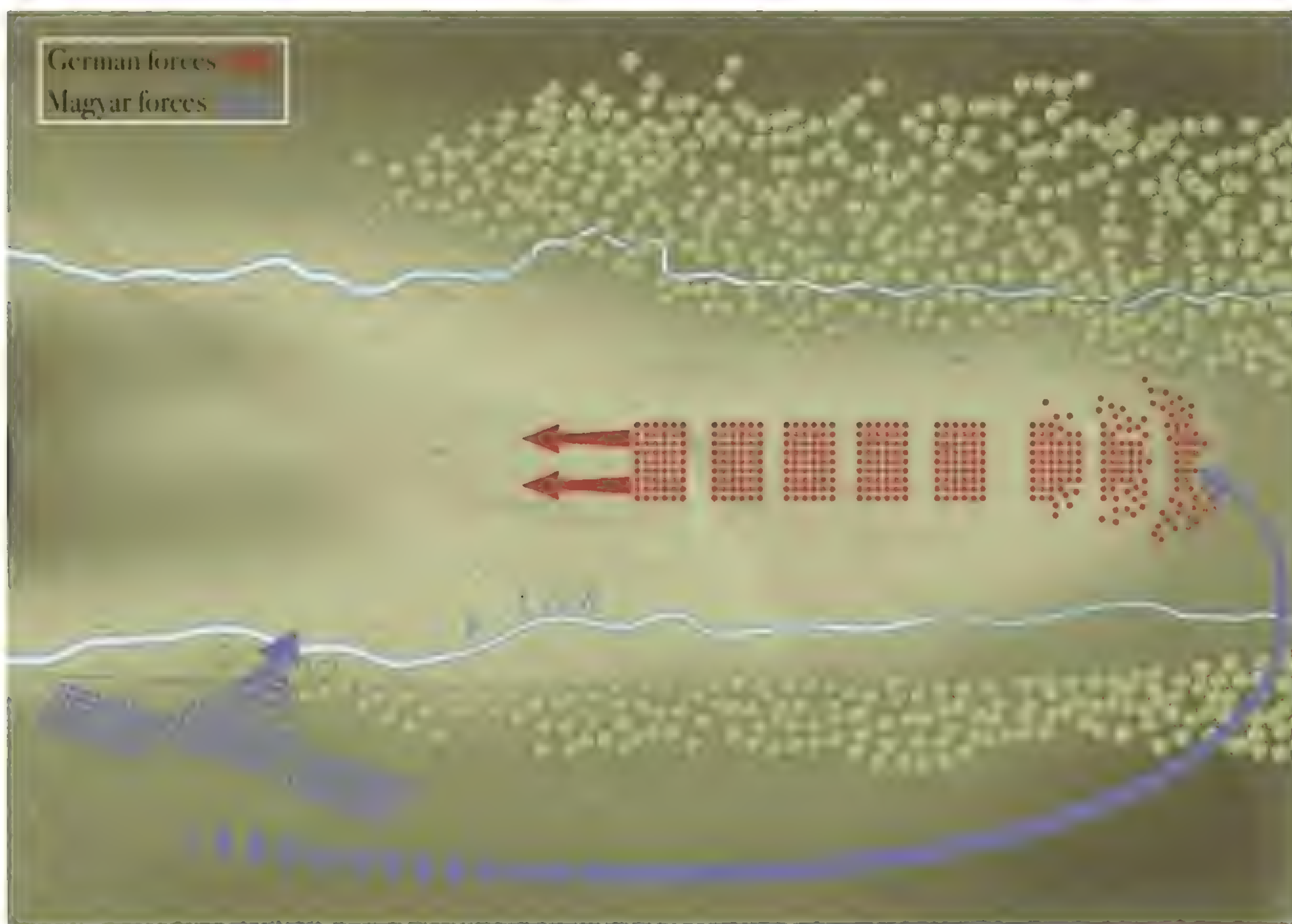
WARRIORS | THE GERMANS

The German armies, in keeping with all those of Western Europe in the early Medieval period, favoured heavy weaponry – lances, double-edged axes, and long swords more suitable for thrusting than slashing. As such, they tended to be ponderous in comparison with the fleet-footed horsemen of the East, and the bow – perhaps owing to the wetter climate of Western Europe – had yet to become a significant part of their armouries.

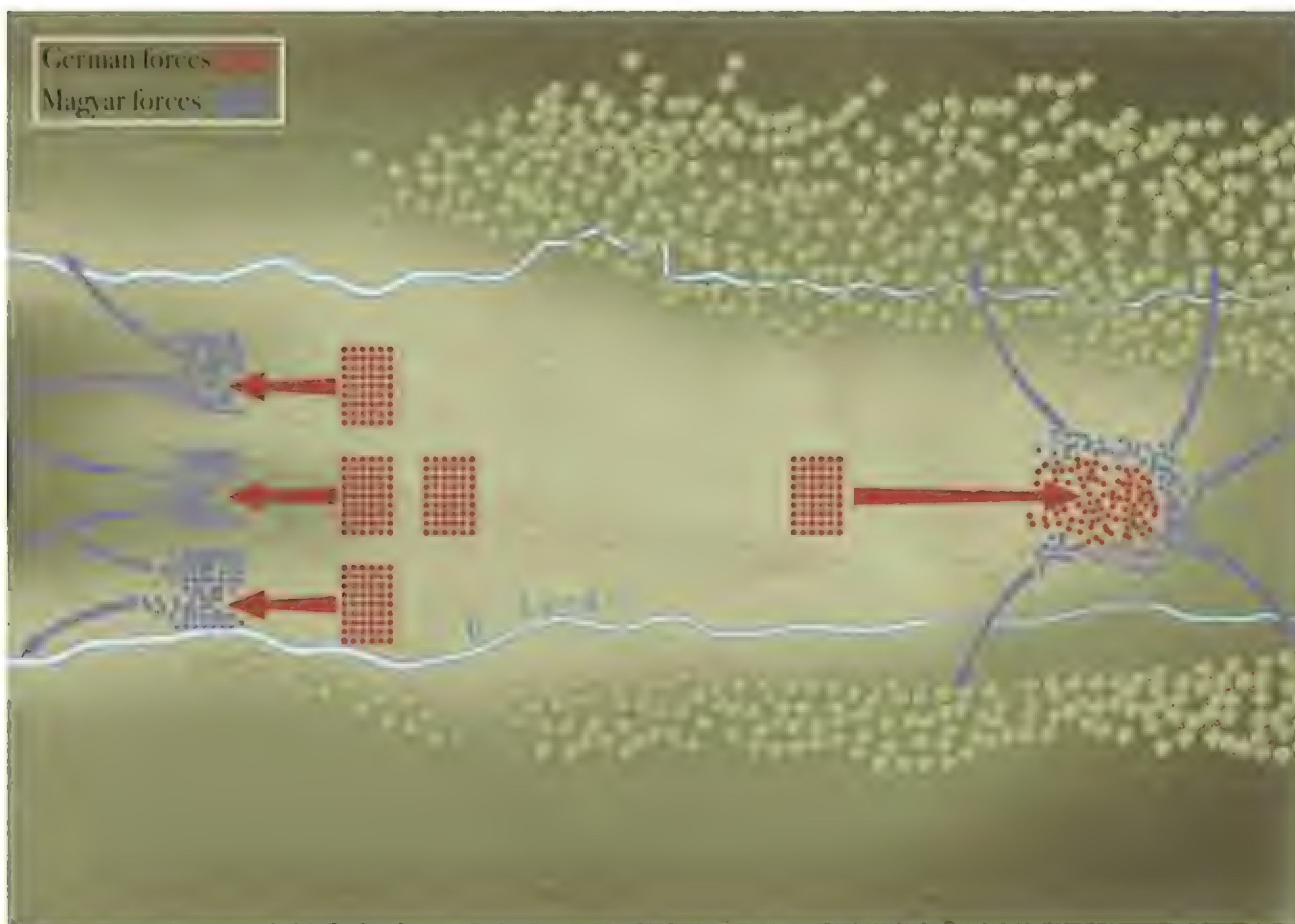
Developments in the 10th century AD enabled the Germans to turn the tables on their Magyar oppressors. The gradual build-up of fortified defences brought more security to communities which had hitherto been easy prey. Storming a fortified town demanded a degree of close-quarters fighting, something the Magyars were ill-equipped for. They were essentially unskilled in siege warfare, and their shortcomings were demonstrated during the Siege of Augsburg, when an attempt to storm the city's east gate misfired.

A second problem for the Magyars in siege warfare was supply. Instead of rapid movement from pasture to pasture, sieges involved protracted static warfare – often against a defender who was well-stocked with supplies and able to hold out for months.

The Germans also improved their defences by creating effective local militia and by training their heavy cavalry to execute flanking moves on the battlefield and, more generally, to respond intelligently and flexibly to the rapid manoeuvres typical of a Magyar host.



Above The Battle of Lechfeld, 10 August AD 955: the Magyar attack. In the first phase of the battle, the fast-moving Magyars attacked the rear of a German column passing through woodland. Conrad the Red was dispatched to launch a counterattack, which succeeded in repelling the Magyars and rallying the broken German units. **Below** The Battle of Lechfeld, 10 August AD 955: the German attack. The Germans launched a full-scale attack on the Magyar line, foot in the centre, horse on the flanks, the latter swinging wide on both left and right to prevent encirclement by the more mobile Magyar horse-archers. The heavier arms and armour of the Germans then proved decisive in the close-quarters fighting that followed.



LECHFELD

following morning, the density of tree cover offering protection against Magyar arrows. This was still a gamble on Otto's part, however, as it left his column vulnerable to attack from the rear, since his force would have found it hard to manoeuvre in the woods.

This was precisely what the Magyars did, sending in a detachment to charge the German baggage-train, which was protected by the Bohemian legion, just as it entered the forest. Their alarming war-cries from the rear spread panic up the German column.

At first, the stratagem worked. Large numbers of Bohemians, and the Swabian units beyond, simply fled. But now the Magyars' traditional thirst for plunder overtook them. Instead of pressing home their advantage and cutting deeper into Otto's ranks, they paused to loot the baggage-train and take prisoners.

Spotting the blunder, Otto ordered Conrad to lead his Franconian horsemen into a counter-attack. Adrift from the main body of the Magyar army, which was deployed in a valley opposite the exit Otto would use as he left the woods, the pillagers were quickly driven off and Conrad recaptured the booty before triumphantly re-emerging at Otto's side.

Emerging from the Rauherforst, Otto is said to have drawn his troops into line and delivered a rallying speech: 'They surpass, I know, in numbers, but neither in weapons nor coverage. We know also that they are quite without the help of God, which is of great comfort to us.' With that, he is alleged to have seized the Holy Lance, which carried a nail from Christ's cross and was the symbol of the chief warrior of the German realm, and to have led his cavalry in a headlong charge against the Magyar line.

Otto's attack

In fact, Otto was a more sophisticated commander than such legendary accounts imply. The Magyars were arrayed in crescent formation, infantry in the centre, in front of the archers, with further arrays of elite bowmen posted on the wings. To have launched a full frontal assault would have been to ride into a deathtrap, the formations of heavy horse losing their cohesion as they encountered the Magyar footmen, enabling the archers to close in around them.

Instead, Otto adopted a flanking manoeuvre. His own foot-soldiers advanced steadily towards the Magyar



OTTO THE GREAT, FOUNDER OF THE FIRST REICH

Born in AD 912, a member of a Saxon dynasty, Otto I nurtured imperial ambitions from an early stage in his reign. Taking a haughty, autocratic line with the proudly independent dukes of Germany sometimes led to rebellious flare-ups, but his promotion of churchmen to positions of high government rank, and his encouragement of their missionary enterprises on Germany's heathen borders paid dividends.

He seized control of Lombardy in AD 951, and asked the pope to crown him emperor soon afterwards. This was refused, but victory over the Magyars led to

his men proclaiming his imperial dignity on the battlefield anyway. Then in AD 961, he was called to aid Pope John XII and, beating off Rome's oppressors, he was to proclaim himself the papal protector. He was then crowned emperor in Rome by the pope in AD 962.

Further successes included the subjugation of the Slavs at Recknitz in the same year as Lechfeld (AD 955), his victory over the Magyars, and compelling Bohemia and Poland to become tributaries of the German king.

Italy would remain an area where his rule was most uncertain, but by the time of his death in AD 973, he was the most powerful man in Europe. He is buried in the church he founded at Magdeburg.

Conrad loosened his hauberk to cool off and received an arrow in the throat, dying instantly.

centre, shields raised above their heads to deflect the storm of arrows. Conrad's cavalry were sent out to the left, pulling away the Magyar right wing and thus flattening the crescent. A similar move by Otto's own select forces on the opposite flank opened out the Magyar left.

Once at close range, German arms and armour proved too much for the scantily armoured Magyars with their light sabres and composite bows. 'The bravest of the enemy resisted at the beginning,' recounted Widukind, 'but then, when they saw their comrades turning their backs, they, struck dumb with the terror, were trapped between our men, who cut them down.'

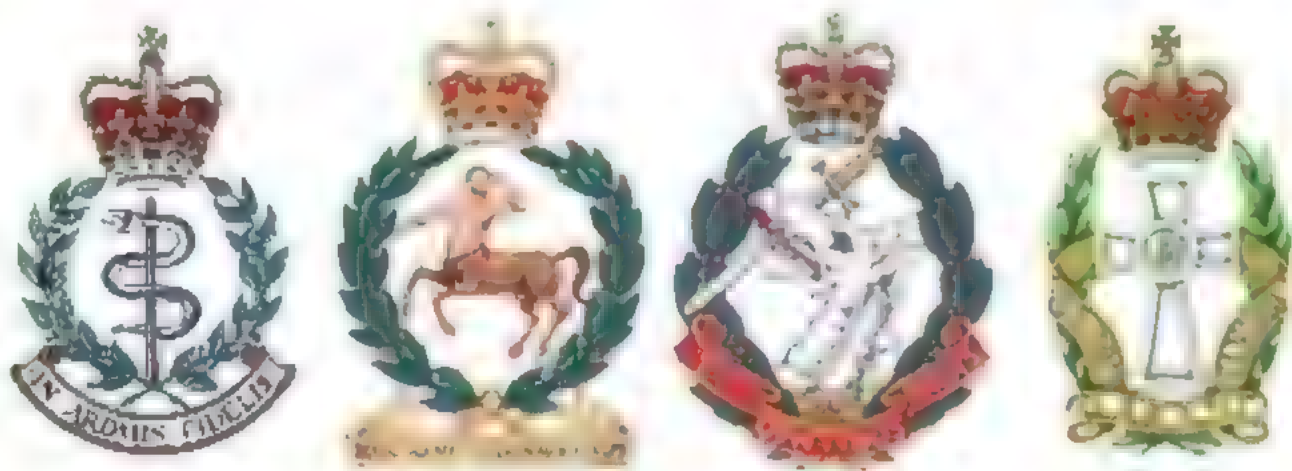
Many of the Magyar archers attempted to feign retreat. It might have worked. Otto's men were visibly tiring in the wearying pursuit that followed, and the brave Conrad, suffering from battle fatigue on an unusually hot summer day, loosened his hauberk to cool off and received an arrow in the throat, dying instantly. But that evening the Magyar camp was taken, and for two days the bedraggled remnants of the beaten army were chased, rounded up, and slaughtered.

The triumph of Otto at Lechfeld was total. He was proclaimed 'Imperator' by his men on the battlefield, going on to establish himself as protector of the papacy and, in effect, the most powerful man in Europe of his time. He even gained the reluctant recognition of the Emperor of Byzantium.

And the Magyars never returned to pillage German territories, abandoning their horse-warrior culture, and settling down to establish their own Kingdom of Hungary and eventually converting to Christianity. 🏰

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Watkins is a freelance journalist and writer on arts, heritage, and conservation.



THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICES MUSEUM

The story of medicine and health care provision to the army from 1660 to the present.

Life sized dioramas, inter-active displays and trails & quizzes for children.

Admission Free!

Open Mon – Fri 0930 – 3.30

AMS Museum, Keogh Barracks,
Ash Vale GU12 5RQ.

01252 868612.

www.ams-museum.org.uk



The only museum in the United Kingdom housed within a disused U.S. Air Force Wing Command Post.
Visit us today for a totally unique experience!



2013 Opening Dates

March
Sunday 17th
April
Monday 15th, Sunday 21st
May
Sunday 5th, Monday 6th,
Sunday 19th, Sunday 26th,
Monday 27th
June
Sunday 2nd, Sunday 16th

July
Sunday 14th
August
Sunday 11th
September
Sunday 15th, Sunday 22nd
October
Sunday 6th, Sunday 20th

BCWM is operated and administered by the Bentwaters Aviation Society, Registered Charity No. 1024977, Accredited Museum No. 200000

Building 134, Bentwaters Park, Bovingdon, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 2TW. Tel: 01904 677000
For further information visit us on the Web at: www.bcw.org.uk





**ROYAL NAVY
FLEET AIR ARM
MUSEUM**

The Fleet is based here

Europe's largest naval aviation museum with over ninety classic and rare aircraft.



The museum contains a collection of unique exhibits including:

Fairey Delta Two - first aircraft to fly at over 1000mph. Airspeed record holder 1956
Supermarine 510 - first swept wing jet to take off and land on a carrier
Short 184 - first aircraft to take part in a naval battle (1916)
Short 527 (replica) - first naval fixed wing aircraft 1912
Hawker P1052 - prototype swept wing sea hawk
Handley Page 115 - prototype delta wing aircraft
Supermarine Attacker - last remaining example
Westland Wyvern - last remaining example
Concorde 002 - first British build Concorde
Fairey Albacore - last remaining example

Some of the above aircraft might not be on public display at the time of your proposed visit. Please check website.

THE
NATIONAL
MUSEUM



Its bigger than you think!

The Royal Engineers Museum recounts the history of the Corps of Royal Engineers from its beginnings to the experiences of the Corps today.



ROYAL ENGINEERS
MUSEUM
LIBRARY & ARCHIVE

www.re-museum.co.uk

Royal Engineers Museum Prince Arthur Road
Gillingham Kent ME4 4UG Tel: 01634 822839

RONALD ADAM

Plumbers in the cookhouse



SIR RONALD ADAM AND BRITAIN'S NEW MODEL ARMY 1941-1946

Roger Broad discovers that one of the most influential British generals of World War II was more political radical than great commander.



Above The Eton OTC being tailor-fitted for their uniforms before WWII. Often, able men who had not been to public or grammar school were discouraged from putting themselves forward as officer cadets.

Inset Portrait of influential general and political radical, Sir Ronald Adam, painted by Reginald Grenville Eves.

Early in the Second World War, Scots comedian Will Fyffe told a joke about how, on being called up and asked what his job was, he said that he was a plumber. To show his skill he was told to solder two pipes together. His report read: 'Joint perfectly done.' The Army made him a cook.

This popular and scornful recognition of the Army's chronic incapability to

allocate its manpower effectively was not amusing to the War Office, even less so to the tens of thousands of men often haphazardly assigned to one military employment or another in the first three years of the war. Soldiers had an apt term, 'brownd off', to express their boredom and sense of grievance at their superiors' incompetence and insensitivity.

Behind this was the experience of the First World War, when the Army had

Right Adam's new officer selection system picked out potential officers more quickly and effectively than ever before, combining physical testing with processes involving psychiatrists and psychologists.

expanded rapidly to feed the insatiable demands of the Western Front and the 'brass hats' appeared indifferent to the carnage. As a result British political and public opinion in the 1930s had refused to countenance peacetime conscription. So when war broke out in September 1939, a mass army had once again to be raised in a hurry. But the War Office had little knowledge of the personnel selection procedures employed by Britain's more dynamic employers.

Joining up

On registering for service, men were given a medical examination and normally interviewed by an officer about their education, experience, and skills. These officers rarely had any training in personnel selection, and in some cases men were called up and posted to units without such interviews. If a particular formation needed 1,000 men, 1,000 men were posted to it. Many plumbers turned up in the cookhouse.

After escaping from Dunkirk, where he had been responsible for laying out the defensive perimeter, General Sir Ronald Adam took over Northern Command. Studies by the command psychiatrist showed that 20% of the infantrymen and 50% of the pioneers were capable of more responsible work than they were currently doing; conversely, another 20% of the infantry and 50% of men in armoured units were not up to the demands of their employment. Morale was low and so was military efficiency.

When Adam became Adjutant-General in June 1941, one of his first acts was to set up a directorate for the selection of personnel. They quickly created an overall programme of interviewing and testing on a scientific basis. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and statisticians set up appropriate tests and supervised their application. They aimed at finding out men's general and technical ability, their psychological stability, their combatant temperament, and their potential to show leadership as NCOs or officers.

The Old Guard

But for this system to be effective, Adam had to overcome resistance to any change in the peacetime procedure whereby regiments and corps recruited their men



directly from civilian life. The cavalry and tank regiments had come under the umbrella of the Royal Armoured Corps just before the war, but his first attempt to bring the foot soldiers into a Corps of Infantry failed.

He had more success early in 1942 when the Army Council (comprising the

country's political and military leadership) accepted a more radical measure. From then on recruits – whether volunteers or conscripts – went into the General Service Corps for six weeks' basic training (except the Guards, who had enough political pull to stand aside).

After being instructed in the basics of military life and taking aptitude tests, men were posted on to a regiment or corps for further training that aimed to reconcile the Army's needs, the men's abilities, and, if possible, their wishes.

Following this change, the failure rate among men undergoing technical training fell sharply – a vital development in view of the increasing amount of complex weaponry and equipment becoming available. Similar selection procedures were applied to women in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, which was increasingly taking on technical and other responsible tasks to free men for combat duties.

Officer selection

Hidebound attitudes also hindered effective selection of officers. In 1939 nine out of ten regular officer cadets had come through public schools, and ►

Men who had not been to public school or at least grammar school, who had regional accents, or who held even mildly left-wing views, tended to be excluded.



Above Royal Engineer recruits build a bridge in training.

the assumption was still that this form of education was the best basis for choosing wartime officers. Early in the war, men who wanted to be commissioned were usually sent forward on the basis of a 20-minute interview with their unit commanding officers.

Men who had not been to public school or at least grammar school, who had regional accents, or who held even mildly left-wing views, tended to be excluded. The result was that many able men were discouraged from putting themselves forward, and, as Adam commented, too many 'duds' with the preferred background got through.

The GSC system identified potential officers more accurately and earlier on, and the War Office Selection Board (WOSB) – the 'Wozbee' – that Adam created took the matter further. The COs' initial proposal was now only a preliminary step, for the decision whether or not to send a man to an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) was taken by the boards, which were guided by psychiatrists and psychologists – to the disgust of many regular officers, who preferred to rely on 'bluff common sense' and who affected to despise the 'trick cyclists', though in reality fearing them.

At the Wozbee, candidates spent two to three days, usually at a requisitioned country house, mixing in relaxed fashion with the staff and undergoing further aptitude, personality, and initiative tests, as well as a board interview. The new system picked out potential officers more quickly and more efficiently. It was also felt to be much fairer, even by those who failed. Morale improved. However, throughout the war the number and quality of officers never reached the level the Army needed. Adam blamed this in large measure on the inadequacies of the

The number and quality of officers never reached the level the Army needed – due in large measure to the inadequacies of the British educational system.

British educational system, under which the overwhelming mass of the population left school at 14.

The lure of air and sea

The Army's personnel problems were also a consequence of the service preference provision of the September 1939 National Service Act, whereby men registering could express a wish to join the Navy or Air Force rather than the Army. Over half did so, although the senior and junior services never comprised more than 40% of total service manpower. They could therefore take their pick.

The shadow of the Somme loomed heavily over the Army: even without the advice of fathers and uncles and the fears of mothers, the Army was unpopular. The land service was therefore left with many disgruntled rejects from the other services, and many of lesser ability than those who wore one or other of two shades of blue. Moreover, its own need to cream off men to service and operate new weaponry and equipment, and to post the most combative men to commando and parachute units, meant that the line infantry in particular ended up with many second-rate men.

Yet, paradoxically, the psychological and physical demands of combat on infantrymen were probably greater than those on most other service personnel. ▶



Above Play, not politics! Some felt that soldiers should not be encouraged to discuss the politics of the war. One divisional commander said to his educational officer, 'I don't care what you do to keep the chaps quiet, but don't educate them.'

RONALD ADAM



Above Crossing a river under fire. The East Yorkshire Regiment at training in July 1943.

Whether known as 'shell-shock', 'combat fatigue', or 'post-traumatic stress disorder', it was 'the poor bloody infantry' who were the main victims.

The thinking soldier?

From the autumn of 1942 onwards, the GSC and the WOSB systems made an increasingly positive contribution to the British Army's battlefield achievements. Up to then, the Army had had a dispiriting record of almost

unremitting retreat and defeat – in Norway, France, Greece, Crete, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. In North Africa the 8th Army was playing ping-pong with the Axis until Alamein – 'the end of the beginning', in Churchill's phrase.

These first two of Adam's reforms were upsetting enough to traditional minds. His third was more disturbing still: he wanted soldiers to think. He recognised that the more sceptical and self-confident generation now in uniform had to be led with intelligence, skill, and humanity. 'Theirs not to reason why' attitudes were still common nearly a century after Balaclava. But the more enlightened senior officers saw that citizen soldiers in a democracy had to be convinced that they were fighting in a just and worthy cause. 'For King and Country' and brutal discipline were no longer enough.

At Northern Command, Adam had ordered regimental officers to undertake discussion sessions about the war with their men on the basis of newspaper cuttings. Once Adjutant-General, he was able to expand the existing educational provisions and make education a compulsory part of Army life. Under his aegis, the War Office produced a fortnightly pamphlet entitled 'War' that dealt with matters of an immediate military nature. A new body, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA), put out 'Current Affairs' pamphlets on alternate weeks with a wider

remit, such as 'Balkan Background', 'Meet the Americans', and 'The Nazis in Scandinavia'.

More controversially, some pamphlets dealt with post-war domestic policy. 'Schools for Tomorrow' and 'Women after the War' are examples. To some this was 'politics', and, they felt, soldiers should not be encouraged to discuss politics. The historically minded remembered the Putney Debates in Cromwell's New Model Army and, within recent memory, the arguments in the Russian Imperial Army before the revolution in 1917. One divisional commander greeted his educational officer with: 'I don't care what you do to keep the chaps quiet, but don't educate them.'

From warfare to welfare

From Churchill downwards, some argued that discussion of post-war policy would weaken men's determination to fight. It also reflected the fear of an increasingly left-wing trend in public opinion. Many matters considered to be beyond the remit and capacity of government during the 1930s – full employment, 'fair shares', better social care for mothers and children, works canteens, works production committees – were now shown to be necessary for the war effort. From the beginning of rationing in January 1940, the warfare state was mutating into the welfare state.

Under the wartime electoral truce, the major parties they did not put up opposing candidates when an MP died or resigned; but independents and the new left-wing Common Wealth party did – and won startling victories in traditional Conservative seats. The ultimate disaster for the Right came in 1945, when Winston Churchill, the inspirer of resistance, was on the morrow of victory in Europe cast aside by the electorate with a landslide majority for the Labour Party.

Against an unexpected and unwelcome reality many found reassurance in a scapegoat: ABCA. The reality in this case was that three-fifths of the voters did not believe that Churchill was the man to lead a peacetime government. As the wartime Coldstream captain and peacetime military historian Michael Howard wrote in his memoirs, 'However great our admiration for Winston Churchill, few of us saw any reason to be grateful to the Conservative Party for its management of national affairs during the 1930s.'

But the idea that an indoctrinated service vote swung the election for

Below An armed people is a dangerous people. The political implications for a conservative Establishment of a mass popular Army turned out to be of huge significance for the shape of post-war Britain.





Labour is belied by the figures. Only two-fifths of the servicemen and -women eligible to vote (at the age of 21) actually cast their ballots. This was not enough for Labour to win, even if all the service votes had been cast for that party (perhaps three-quarters were). Most voters, service and civilian, had hopes of a better post-war Britain.

An Old Etonian architect of Labour triumph?

So did General Sir Ronald Forbes Adam, second baronet, Old Etonian and career soldier, engineer Labour's victory? Both Sir James Grigg, the war minister – a conservative figure – and parliamentary undersecretary Lord Croft – even more so – approved of army education in principle. The devil was in the detail. Croft in particular was enraged by the left-wing influences let loose.

Adam's daughter Isobel described her father as being 'Attlee Labour' in 1945. Reticent to a fault, Adam reveals little in his sparse post-war writings, but the liberalism of his family background and his conviction that men and women of ability could be found in all walks of society show that he was no brass brain under his 'brass hat'. If most wartime soldiers (and a good few regulars) wanted major social and economic change when the fighting was over, then they had a right as the citizens of a democracy to discuss it and to work for it.

Whether known as 'shell-shock', 'combat fatigue', or 'post-traumatic stress disorder', it was 'the poor bloody infantry' who were the main victims.

Above On the road to 1945? Eton OTC recruits pile out of a ditched gun trailer.

With the GSC, Adam brought analysis and reason in place of tradition and sentiment; with the WOSB, science and objectivity in place of hunch and prejudice; and with ABCA, open discussion and debate in an organisation based on authority and obedience. He was a radical general.

He is also Britain's unknown general. Less famous – or infamous – than his battlefield colleagues, and remarkably self-effacing compared with some of them, he was the exception that proves

the rule of 'the Peter Principle' – that in a hierarchy an employee tends to rise to the level of his incompetence.

Adam's capacity for detailed and hard work had taken him through a variety of ascending staff jobs between the wars, eventually becoming Chief Instructor and Commandant of the Staff College, and then a reliable Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1938-1939, a fine corps commander in France in 1939-1940, an able GOC at Northern Command, and an outstanding Adjutant-General.

Of conventional enough background to achieve high rank in a very conservative institution, Adams rose steadily thanks to his reputation as a capable administrator with a shrewd diplomatic ability – 'a safe pair of hands'. Suddenly, when given the need, the opportunity, and the authority, he trod on official toes, kicked not a few shins, and broke up some of the War Office's most elegant and revered Victorian mental and ritual furniture, with admirable effect.

The British Army and the British people were fortunate in having a man of such judgement as 'Bill' Adam at their service in so many roles, over so many years. ☞

Further reading

Roger Broad's *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army 1941-46* has just been published at £18.99 by the History Press.

We would be proud to take you
into the history of

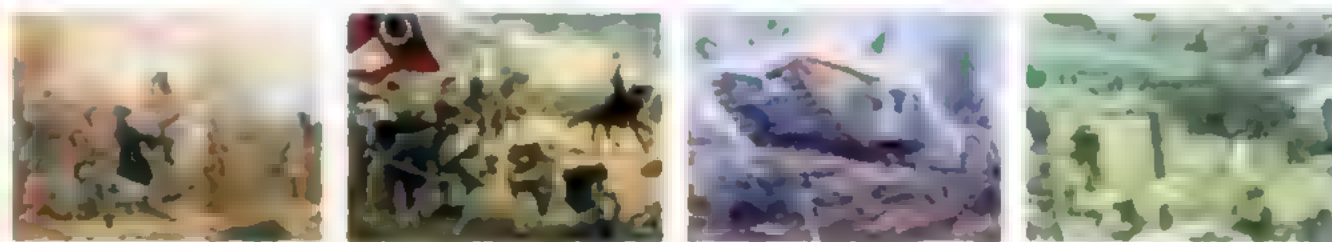
**two exciting tours
led by PETER KNOX OBE.**

- 1915 Gallipoli Campaign
- The Forgotten part of the Great
Crimean War
(The Siege of Kars, 1855)



PETEN TRAVELS

Halaskargazi Cad. No:183 Helal Apt.
D.7 34381 Şişli - İstanbul / Türkiye
T. +90 212 248 96 96 F. +90 212 246 19 36
E. petenturizm@petentour.com W. www.petentour.com



Old Country Military & History Tours Inc

2013 is our 20th anniversary; over these years we have arranged
for individuals, families, groups and military units bespoke tours,
guided by experts to a variety of military & historic sites

American Civil War Tours

The Gettysburg Campaign 9 June – 23 July 1863; 4 – 13 May
War on the Mississippi River; 1 – 13 June
The Eastern Theatre Campaigns 14 – 27 September

To receive our 2013 brochure please contact;

PO Box 98, Shaftesbury,
Dorset SP7 9WA.
Great Britain.

44 (0)1747 828719
e mail oldcount@aol.com
www.oldcountrytours.com



Member and Supporter of the Guild of Battlefield Guides



THOMAS GUNN

AVAILABLE DIRECT FROM US AND FROM ALL GOOD QUALITY
TOY SOLDIER STOCKISTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.



BRITISH INFANTRY ZULU WAR



A7 GERMAN WWI TANK



FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION



WWI BRITISH ARMoured CAR



WWI GERMAN PILOTS



RNAS WWI ARMoured CAR

**1/30TH
SCALE**

Thomas Gunn Miniatures 67 Market Place, Warminster, BA12 9AZ, UK

Phone: 0044 1985 219472 - Fax: 0044 1985 216105

www.tomgunn.co.uk - welcome@tomgunn.co.uk

**1/30TH
SCALE**

APRIL 2013

OnManoeuvres

LISTINGS | MUSEUM



DATES TO REMEMBER

THIS APRIL

April On 13 April the Royal Artillery Museum's exhibition, 'A Woman's Place...', ends. This excellent show explores the vital role of women serving in the British Army during World War II and in today's Afghanistan. Go and see it while you still can! Other highlights include the Western Front Association's

lecture on the Royal Marine's pivotal role at Gallipoli, and a tour at IWM Duxford looking at the arrival of the USAAF in Britain 70 years ago.

Richard Lucas visited Lebanon this month to report on the extraordinary Hezbollah War Museum and Monuments, devoted to a contemporary conflict.



Listings

66

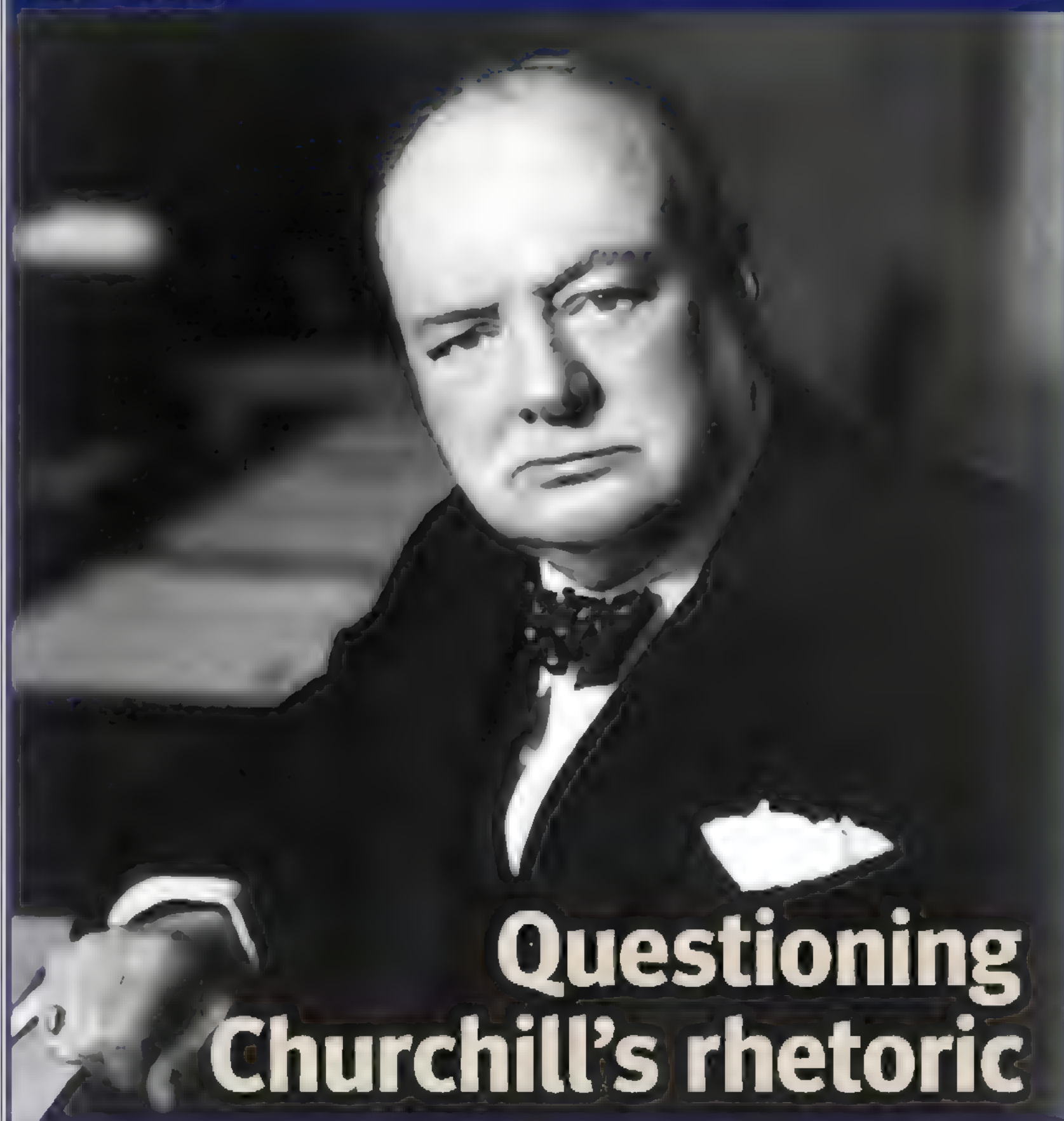


Museum

68

DATES TO REMEMBER

LECTURE



Questioning Churchill's rhetoric

It is widely believed that the British people were unanimously enthusiastic about Churchill's wartime speeches. It is true that many were, but others were not. Drawing on evidence from contemporary diaries and surveys, the author and historian Richard Toye shows that Churchill's speeches were much more controversial than is often assumed, and much more widely criticised than the popular myth suggests.

Included in the price of your ticket will be the opportunity to view excellent Churchill War Rooms after the event.

The Roar of the Lion: the making of Churchill's World War speeches
23 April 2013

Churchill War Rooms
One Day
Full Queen's Gallery
London
SW1A 2AQ

020 7930 6961
www.iwm.org.uk

£17
ENTRY

HISTORY FAIR

Everything history

The fifth instalment of this annual multi-era event will include re-enactor and collector stalls, professional historical traders, and living-history displays from the Early Medieval, Medieval and Napoleonic periods, as well as World War I, the 1940s and the 1980s. A huge variety of historical items will be on sale, in picturesque surroundings with excellent facilities, and you can pose for a Victorian wet-glass plate photo! A £3 visitor car-parking fee applies.

Grand Historical and Vintage Bazaar
27 April 2013

Rufford Abbey Country Park
Nottinghamshire, NG22 9DF



01509 815645
www.eventplan.co.uk

FREE
ENTRY

EXHIBITION



Female Fighters

Follow the WAAC and WAAF women who served in the RAF during World War II and in many other theatres. A unique collection of historical photographs from the WAAC and WAAF archives, a moving account of their experiences, the award-winning and award-winning film 'The Women's War' and the book 'The Women's War' will be on display in 2012 at the IWM London and the IWM Duxford.

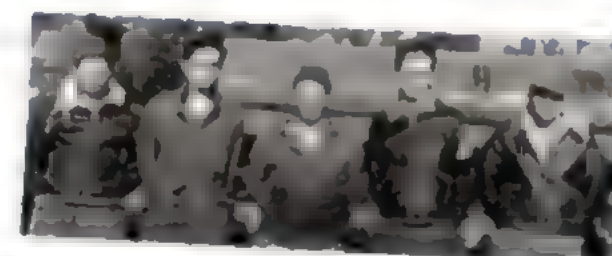
A Woman's Place
10 April 2013

10 April 2013
10 April 2013

020 7930 6961
www.iwm.org.uk

FREE
ENTRY

TOUR



The Yanks are coming!

In the 70th anniversary year of the United States Army Air Force arriving at RAF Duxford, this new 'Americans in Britain' tour will look at the US aircraft flown from RAF Duxford and other USAAF stations in East Anglia during the Second World War.

Find out how the local people reacted to this friendly invasion, and how the American airmen found life at RAF Duxford. Hear about their bravery in combat and their off-duty exploits.

The 'Americans in Britain' tour runs for approximately 90 minutes. Groups will not exceed 25 people and there will be opportunities for questions, debate, and personal interaction. The tour is suitable for all ages but is primarily aimed at adults.

Reservations at £20.70 per person
10 April 2013
10 April 2013

01223 835 000
www.iwm.org.uk

£20.70
ENTRY

FAMILY EVENT

Commander kids

Bring budding generals along to the National Army Museum this Easter and help rewrite history! Recreate some of Britain's greatest battles on our table-top battlefield, with soldiers from the past on hand to advise you and help you win the day.

Tickets are not required, and the event is suitable for ages seven-plus. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Pick a fight!
6-7 April 2013

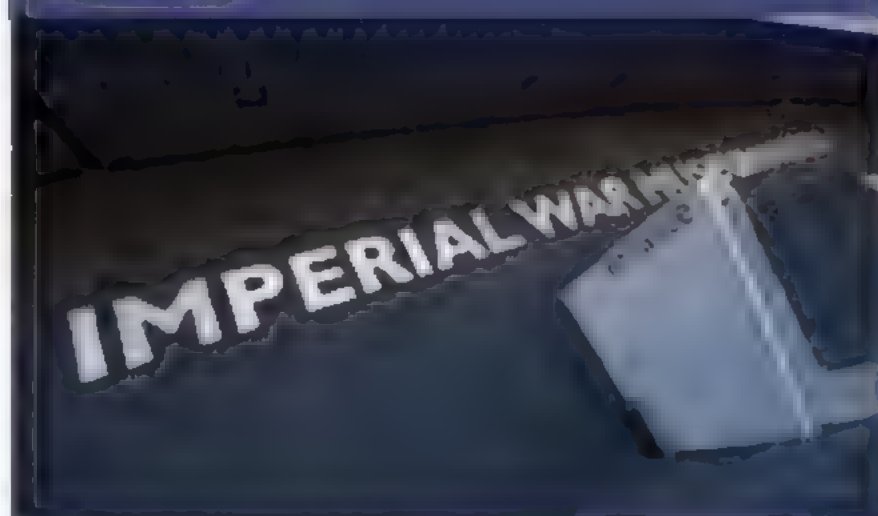
National Army Museum
Royal Hospital Road
Chelsea, SW3 4HT



☎ 020 7881 6606
🌐 www.nam.ac.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**

TOUR



The unseen side

The North Side of IWM Duxford is not normally seen by the visitor. Discover hidden parts of the historic RAF site in the company of one of the museum's experienced guides.

You'll be escorted around the exterior of the historic buildings and find out what each building was used for during wartime, as well as hearing captivating tales about the men and women who served at RAF Duxford during this period.

North Side Tour
20 April 2013

IWM Duxford
Cambridgeshire
CB22 4QR

☎ 01223 835 000
🌐 www.iwm.org.uk

**£20.70
ENTRY**

LECTURE

Marine study

Chris Newberry, until recently Director of the Royal Marines Museum in Portsmouth, makes a welcome visit to the Dorset and South Wiltshire branch of the Western Front Association. Chris will bring a deep knowledge of the Royal Marines in the Great War to his talk, discussing the presence in Gallipoli of the Marines, whose significant role in the ANZAC campaign remains little-known and hardly acknowledged.

For further details, contact branch chairman Martin Willoughby via email.

Royal Marines at Gallipoli

20 April 2013
19.00-20.00
Dorset and South Wiltshire
Branch of the Western Front Association
Lymington, Hants



📧 martin@cambrai.go-plus.net
🌐 www.westernfrontassociation.com

**£4
ENTRY**

CONFERENCE

BATTLE ISLANDS



During the 20th century, every nation in the world was directly or indirectly associated with, or affected by, the impact of war. While the historical narratives and legacies of war for nations are well known, far less is understood about how small islands coped. For this conference, we seek to discover what the memories, legacies, and heritage of war in small islands can teach those who live outside them.

**£40
ENTRY**

Co-organised by:
Imperial War Museum

Co-organised by:
Shropshire Modellers' Show

EVENT

Military miniatures

Thousands of modelling fans from across the country will be gathered at the RAF Museum Cosford for the annual Shropshire Modellers' Show this year, where intricately detailed models will be on display, nestled among aircraft in the museum's hangars.

There will be in the region of 70 model clubs attending the show, plus some 40 traders selling everything you need to build the perfect model, be it tank, car, or boat.

The show is being organised by the Shropshire Scale Modellers, and will be open to the public from 10am-4pm.

Shropshire Modellers' Show
7 April 2013

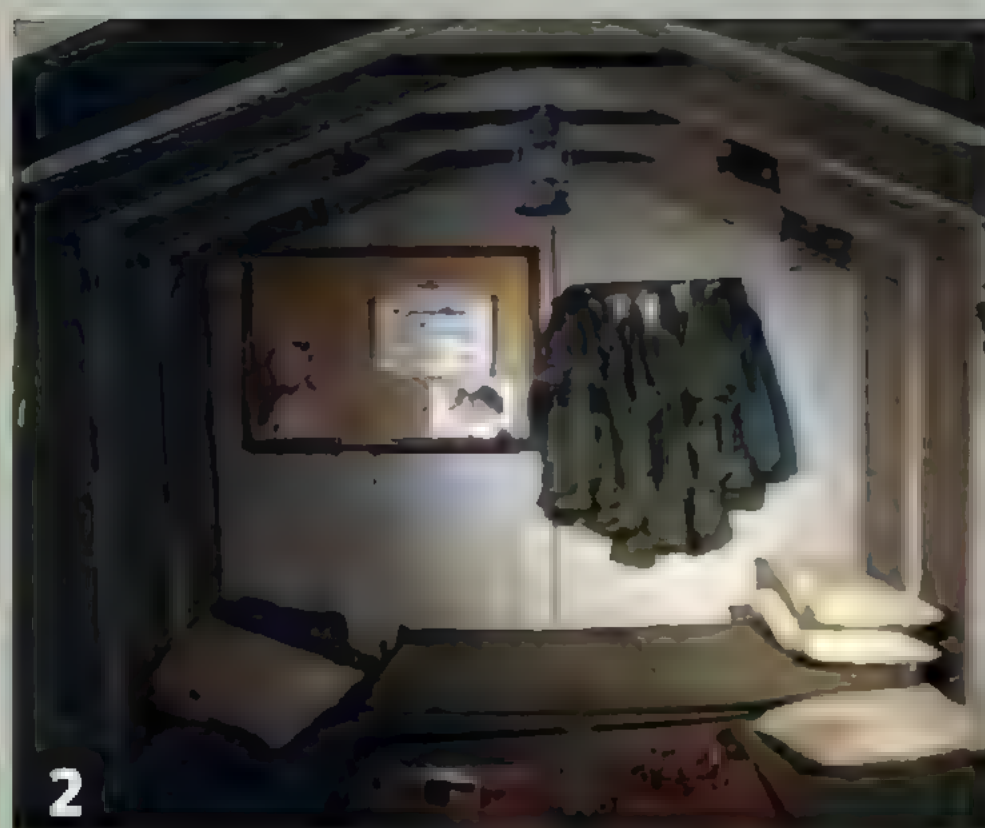
Royal Air Force Museum Cosford
Shifnal
Shropshire, TF11 8UP

☎ 01902 376200
🌐 www.rafmuseum.org.uk

**FREE
ENTRY**



MUSEUM



The Hezbollah War Museum and Monuments

Richard Lucas discovers an extraordinary museum devoted to contemporary conflict in the Middle East.



After years of open conflict, and in the midst of continuing political strife, Lebanon nevertheless remains a prime tourist destination offering visitors some of the most splendid sites in the entire Middle East. From the extensive Roman ruins of Tyre in the south to the cedar forests of the north and the exquisite temples of Baalbak in the Baaka Valley, the entire country is a tourist Mecca. But one site you won't find in the travel brochures is the impressive War Museum at M'leeta. One reason may be that it was opened only fairly recently, but another is undoubtedly its highly politicised and controversial nature.

Getting to M'leeta can be a bit difficult, as it is not a village or town but a remote mountain in a secluded region of south-east Lebanon in the rugged ranges between Jezzine and Nabtiyeh. This is not surprising, as it was here at M'leeta that the resistance movement against the

Israeli invasion started and centred its clandestine activities.

Getting there

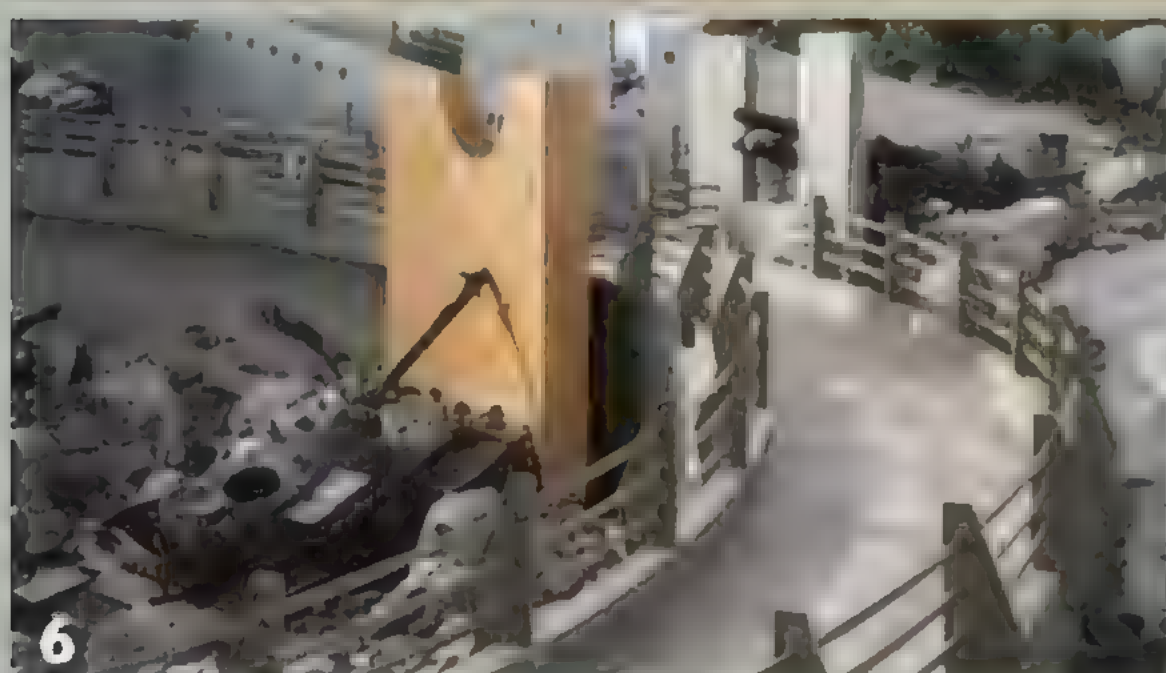
When the rough country road becomes newly paved, you've reached the site. There is a large car park to the left and above it the main gate, which gives the impression of entering a modern college campus. You will be given a plan of the site and are free to walk around on your own or join with a guided tour in several different languages. Just above the entrance is the administration building, a restaurant, and a string of souvenir shops and snack bars. Then you arrive at the main square, with its immense circular fountain.

To the left is 'the Hill'. After climbing a series of stairs, you reach the circular observation area on top. From there the view is outstanding. And anyone can understand the strategic position of the place. It was here, on this hilltop, that Hezbollah began. In the middle of the circle is a monumental plaque honouring fallen fighters.

Next to the fountain is the multi-media centre, where the cinema shows a documentary film about every ten minutes. The film, obviously conceived for Arab audiences, extols the success of Hezbollah and the eventual defeat of the Israeli Army, backed by a soundtrack of explosions, martial music, and religious chants. Despite the obvious propaganda angle, it does contain some good documentary war-footage and provides a fairly good insight into the history, the structure, and the mentality of the organisation. The film ends with the Israeli defeat in 2006 as its army falls into what Hezbollah refers to as 'the Abyss'.

The Abyss or the art of chaos

Crossing the main square, you come to the area of the compound which is called the Abyss in obvious reference to the defeat of the Israelis and their withdrawal from Lebanese territory. It is a large, modern art structure that uses Israeli armoured vehicles, tanks, artillery, and other equipment to symbolise the situation facing Israel at the end of the 2006 invasion. The



VIEWING ON GITH HILL

- 1 & 3. Food and weapons in the underground complex
2. Accommodation in 'the Cave'
4. 'The Abyss'
5. The main square and circular fountain, with 'the Hill' behind
6. Walkway through the Abyss
7. A defensive position
8. 'The Pathway'



chaotic scene of shattered metal, twisted barrels, and overturned vehicles is somewhat reminiscent of what happened to Pharaoh's army as it was engulfed by the waters of the Red Sea – except that here the engulfing waters are replaced by the rock and sand of south Lebanon.

Walkways cross over, around, and through, giving visitors the opportunity to view the installation and its static confusion from various angles. I got the feeling there was something otherworldly here. The dry ecto-skeletons of military hardware and the hollow carcasses of vehicles lying belly-up in the sun created the impression of something insect-like, with helmets scattered around like so many metallic egg-pods. Whether one agrees with Hezbollah's version of history, whether one supports the movement's resistance or not, one thing is certain: in the Abyss there is a strong visual statement which rivals some of the best in modern art.

The Pathway

On the other side of the Abyss we come to what is known as 'the Pathway'. The Pathway is part of the Hezbollah trench-line. As visitors walk through it, various pieces of military equipment used by the fighters are presented at the battle stations. The Pathway also links up with 'the Cave', 'the Outlook', and 'the Tunnels', all of which formed part of the defensive complex used by the fighters.

A large part of the network lies underground, dug deep into the rocky

hillside. It is said that from a small 4m² crevasse in the rock more than 400m of tunnels and galleries were dug into the mountain side. At one time this underground complex housed hundreds of fighters, and was equipped with kitchens, a hospital, sleeping quarters, a command room, and more.

Once out in daylight, the path continues to various defence positions with panels presenting equipment and combat units: Special Forces, Anti-Tank, and Anti-Aircraft. At the end is the 'Field of Honour', a well-tended garden with benches, drinking fountains, and nearby toilets. Here several monuments are erected commemorating the movement and its fallen heroes.

Back down at the main square there is the War Museum. Here a wide variety of captured Israeli arms and equipment is on display in glass cases and in sub-ground-level exhibition areas. On the wall a large panel with aerial photos maps out the destruction and the casualties which Hezbollah claims were inflicted on the civilian population during the last Israeli incursion into Lebanese territory. A large majority of civilian deaths were caused by Israeli airstrikes and artillery barrages, which, in the documentary film, are said to have been Israeli retaliation and punishment for the growing resistance to the invasion.

A Mountain and the Heavens

For the people of Hezbollah this isolated mountain top called M'leeta is revered as a place of courage, commitment,

and sacrifice – a place where 'the Land Speaks to the Heavens'. Most of the visitors I saw were from Lebanon or neighbouring countries, some openly supportive of the movement, others simply curious or out for a pleasant day in the country.

Recently the site has become recognised by the Lebanese Ministry of Tourism as an official tourist site, and from what I understand more and more Western tourists are coming here. Whatever your political views may be, a visit to M'leeta is well worth the effort. One should plan on spending the better part of the day there, in view of the immensity of the site. 🇅🇸

FURTHER INFORMATION

The museum is located at Jarjou-Ein Boswar Road, Iklim al Tuffah, south Lebanon, and is open from 10am to 9pm daily.

00 961 (0)7210211
www.mleeta.com





CLASSICAL MILITARY HISTORY: ANCIENT WARFARE MAGAZINE

Ancient Warfare magazine is a bi-monthly publication focused exclusively on soldiers, battles and tactics all before 600 A.D. Each issue contains beautiful, original illustrations, articles by expert authors and themes chosen by readers.

CALL (020) 8816 8281
www.ancient-warfare.com



...AND THE NEXT 1000 YEARS: MEDIEVAL WARFARE MAGAZINE

Medieval Warfare is the only magazine exclusively focused on military history in the period between 500 - 1500 A.D. Picking up where *Ancient Warfare* leaves off, this publication explores warfare in the age of warlords and castles.

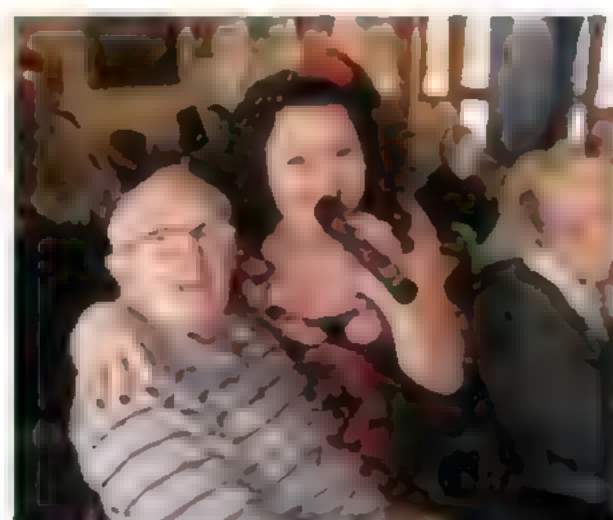
CALL (020) 8816 8281
www.medieval-warfare.com



THE
NOT FORGOTTEN
ASSOCIATION

A TRI-SERVICE CHARITY FOUNDED IN 1920

We are a national tri-service charity which provides help and support for the serving wounded, injured or sick and for ex-service men and women with disabilities.



We do this through a programme of recreational, leisure and adventure activities and through the provision of televisions and TV licences.

If you think that you, or someone you know, may be eligible for our help please contact us, or your military association or service benevolent charity.

From Comradeship To Challenge

The Not Forgotten Association
Tel: 0207 730 2400 Email: info@nfassociation.org
www.nfassociation.org

fibiS FAMILIES IN
BRITISH INDIA
SOCIETY



For all Genealogical, Historical & Military Data on British India visit

www.fibis.org

APRIL 2013

MHMReviews

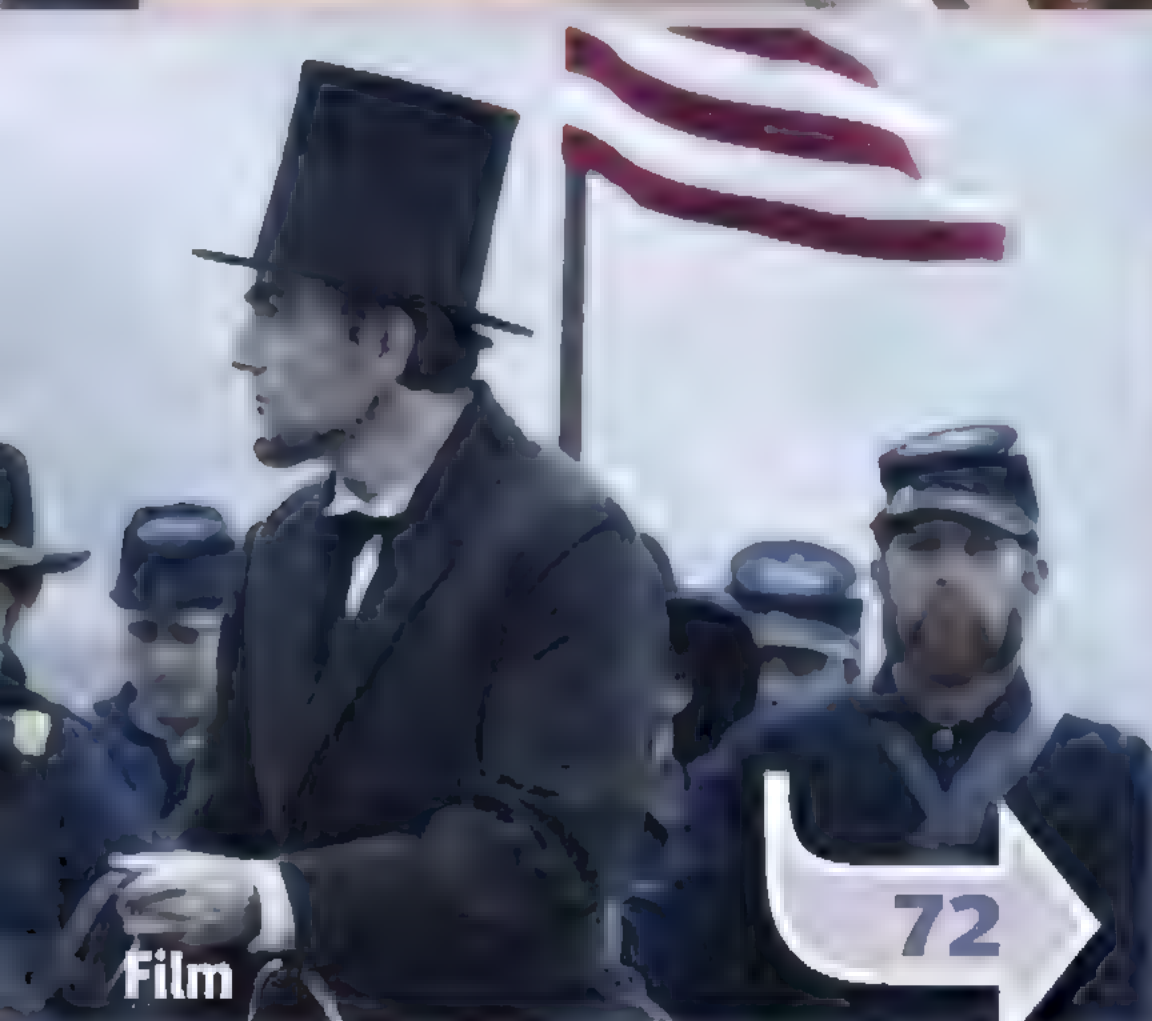
FILM | TV | BOOKS



April Falklands veteran Julian Thompson reviews *Elizabeth's Sea Dogs: how the English became the scourge of the seas* by Hugh Bicheno for our lead review this month. Sean Rayment reveals some of the secrets of the Special Forces Club in his new book, and Jules Stewart reviews a new publication from *MHM* contributor, Roger Broad.

The Military History Channel is giving you another chance to experience the first series of its excellent *Full Metal Jousting*, while in *Ultimate Weapons* you are taken through the evolution of weaponry and its importance to the modern world.

For our film review, *MHM* editor Neil Faulkner reviews Steven Spielberg's new American Civil War epic, *Lincoln*.



Film

72



TV

73



Books

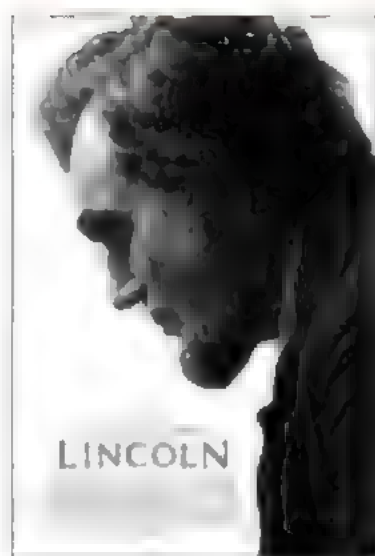
74

FILM

LINCOLN



STEVEN SPIELBERG
25 JANUARY



Clausewitz taught us that war is an extension of politics. No apology, then, for including a review of Steven Spielberg's new biopic *Lincoln* in

Military History Monthly, even though the only battle scene is a short, visceral hand-to-hand struggle in mud and rain between Confederate soldiers and black Union men determined to kill them all in revenge for an earlier massacre of black prisoners.

It is a good way to open. For the subject of the film is a revolutionary war to remake America, and its central focus is the struggle to secure the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in January 1865, when the war was nearing its close, a provision designed to abolish slavery forever.

The Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862 had been an emergency war measure which Lincoln had enacted in his capacity as commander-in-chief. Its effect had been to radicalise the war by shutting

off any possibility of compromise, encouraging slaves to flee the plantations, and paving the way for large-scale recruitment of black men into the Union Army.

But there could be no going back. Slavery had led to secession and war; the fractured Union could only be reunited on a secure foundation if it was abolished. The possibility of Southern slave-owners mounting legal attempts to recover their 'property' after the war – much of that 'property' now comprising Union soldiers – was a transparent absurdity. It was to remove any possibility of this highly divisive development that Lincoln wanted the Thirteenth Amendment passed.

Daniel Day-Lewis's performance in the title role is stunning. The physical mannerisms, the folksy style, the brooding brilliance, the far-seeing vision, and iron resolution of America's greatest president are all there. The contrast with the squabbling, horse-trading, and petty-mindedness of the lesser men of the political class is sharply drawn. Yet Lincoln appears 'warts and all', his *modus operandi* very much that of the professional politician in its corruption and arm-twisting, his abolitionism sincere but pragmatic, and his relationships with black people



made awkward by an apparently impassable racial barrier. The film is not an exercise in pure hagiography.

Dramatic intensity arises from the interaction of disparate forces – the free blacks, the radical abolitionists, the vacillators in the Lincoln cabinet, the conservative Republicans, the pro-slavery Democrats in Congress, even the Lincoln family with its inner domestic tensions – and from the fact that emissaries from the South are in play, offering the prospect of immediate peace before the Thirteenth Amendment is passed. The scene late in the film where Lincoln confronts Confederate Vice-President Alexander Stephens across the negotiating table aboard a paddle-steamer is one of the highlights. We see Stephens, a weasel-like racist, transfixed with horror and hatred as Lincoln calmly informs him that slavery is over.

The war is omnipresent throughout the film, but usually as a lurking presence off-stage. Apart from the brief opening battle scene, there are others depicting Grant's headquarters, the Petersburg battlefield, and an army hospital. But most of the film is set in the White House, Congress, or somewhere in Washington. Yet the political battle that is waged is so intense, the issues so paramount and so central to the unprecedented slaughter that forms their backdrop, that this is surely a must-see film for serious students of military history.



TV HIGHLIGHTS

ON MILITARY HISTORY

Sky 531 Virgin Media 236



UFO HUNTERS: SERIES TWO

Premières 7 April, 9pm

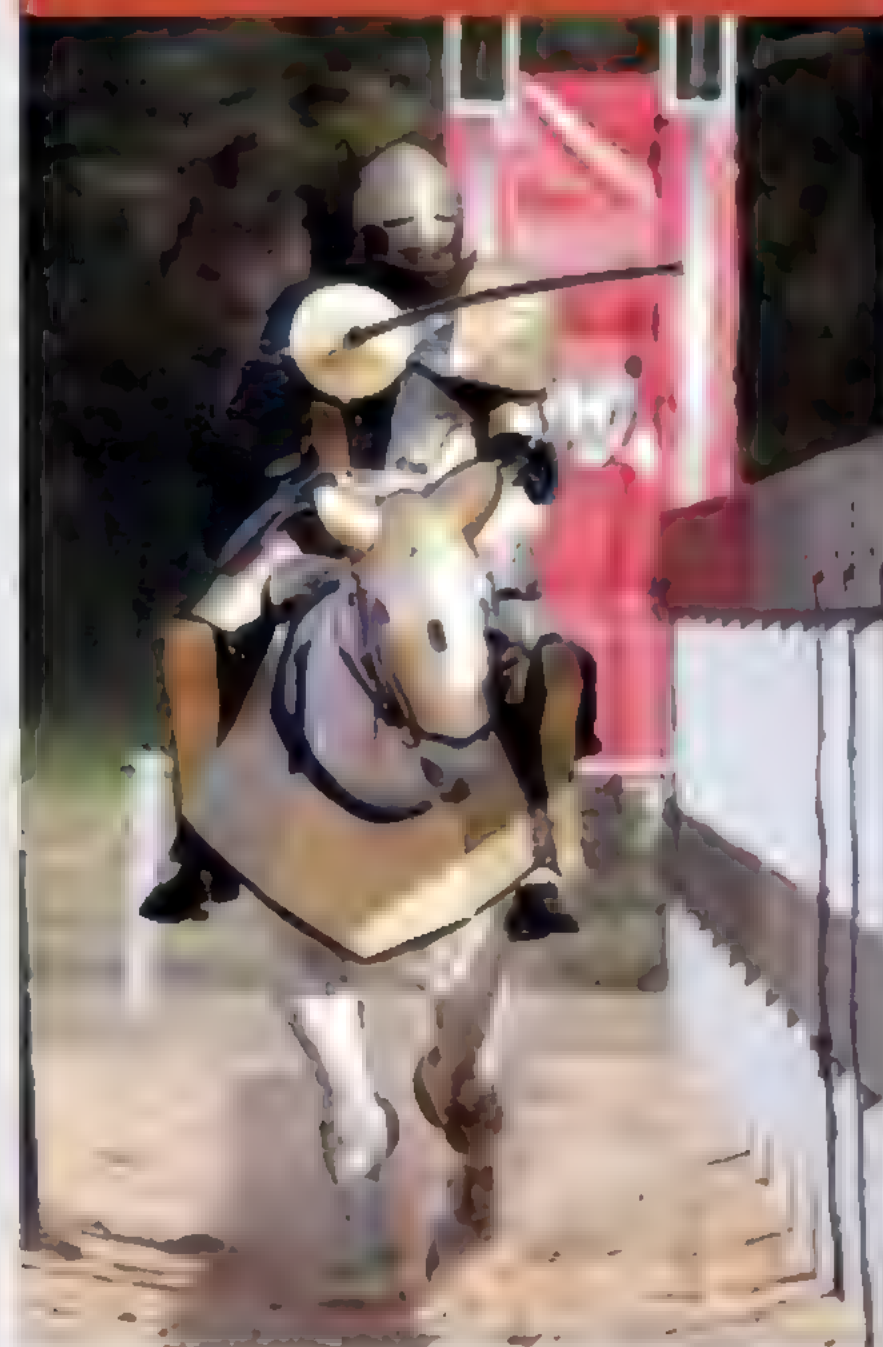
They look to the stars, to Earth, and within the human body. They are the UFO research élite, seeking answers to the mysteries of the UFO phenomenon. Their determination, attitude, and methodologies stand strong against ridicule and disbelief. In the end, UFO hunters exhibit

scientific evidence that pushes the boundary of modern-day thinking. At annual conferences, they share findings and are often stunned by the commonality of their cases.

Their hunts for physical evidence of UFOs and alien life-forms sometimes end up as global wild-goose chases, but there are other times when what they find is just too intriguing, and might just prove that it is possible we are not alone in the universe.

FULL METAL JOUSTING

Fridays, 9pm



In *Full Metal Jousting*, a maverick group of American thrill-seekers compete for top honours in the most dangerous sport in history. Two men and two horses charge at each other and collide at 30mph. Competitors are knocked off their horses, often breaking bones. In fact, it's so dangerous that jousters in other parts of the world will not even attempt it.

In this series, a group of amateurs are trained by veteran jousters. Each week's episode features full-contact preparations, culminating in a series of jousts. In the words of one veteran jouster, 'We don't do this for money; it's about seeing who the best man is on any given day.'



ULTIMATE WEAPONS

Mondays throughout April, 9pm

From the catapult to the stealth fighter, weapons throughout the ages have had the capability to sculpt the course of history. With this in mind, Military History examines weaponry through human history, in terms of its evolving technology and its significance in shaping some of the defining events of civilisation.

Included in the *Ultimate Weapons* series is the UK premiere of *101 Great Weapons that Changed the World*, which gives a rundown of history's most significant weapons, and gives a detailed

explanation as to why each of them was so important.

Also premiering is *Strange Weapons*, which examines the recent utilisation of microwave-like rays and lasers in military arsenals, but also takes a look at more unusual historic weaponry, like a cutlery set containing hidden pistols, and Ninja hand-claws.



BOOKS

ELIZABETH'S SEA DOGS:

how the English became the scourge of the seas

Hugh Bicheno

Conway, £25

ISBN 978-1844861743

Hugh Bicheno's *Elizabeth's Sea Dogs* is a fascinating account of how a corsair culture grew on both sides of the English Channel – pre-dating Drake and Hawkins, persisting well into the 17th century – and its effect on Spain's Atlantic trade.

As Bicheno points out, it was the refusal of the King of Spain to allow the Dutch, French, and English to trade with his American colonies that led the corsairs – hitherto preying on traffic in waters closer to home – to transfer some of their attention to Spanish merchant shipping and settlements. Had the King of Spain allowed normal trade, his bullion fleets might have escaped the attention of the likes of Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and Grenville, and the French La Cabanne, Le Clerc,

and Blondel, to name but some of the swarm of corsairs who preyed on the Spanish merchant trade from the reign of Henry VIII onwards.

Under Henry, the English began using the tactic of the *guerre de course* ('racing war'). In wars to come, this same gambit would be adopted by the weaker maritime power, such as the Americans in 1812, and the Germans in the U-boat campaigns of the First and Second World Wars.

But, as Bicheno points out, this type of warfare was not the outcome of some grand strategic vision on the part of French and English monarchs presiding over a 16th-century version of the National Security Council, but was inspired by good old-fashioned avarice.

The smaller, faster, more heavily gunned ships that emerged from the years of *guerre de course* were to prove decisive when matched against the larger and more ponderous Spanish ships. These were designed primarily for cargo-carrying over long distances, and were armed with two-wheeled

artillery as used on land, instead of more stable four-wheeled cannon.

The Spanish were well aware that the Armada of 1588 was facing a technologically superior force in the English Fleet. But according to Bicheno, 'the deficiencies that doomed the Spanish Armada reflected the profound religious delusion of Philip II, who micro-managed it'. He could not temper religion with practical advice, unlike Cromwell, who half a century later told his soldiers, 'Put your trust in God, my boys, and keep your powder dry.' Or the padre and international-class rifle shot, of one of my battalions in the Falklands, who sent for the snipers, and having said a prayer, zeroed their rifles.

Philip declaims, 'when we fight the English, God will surely arrange matters so that we can grapple and board them, either

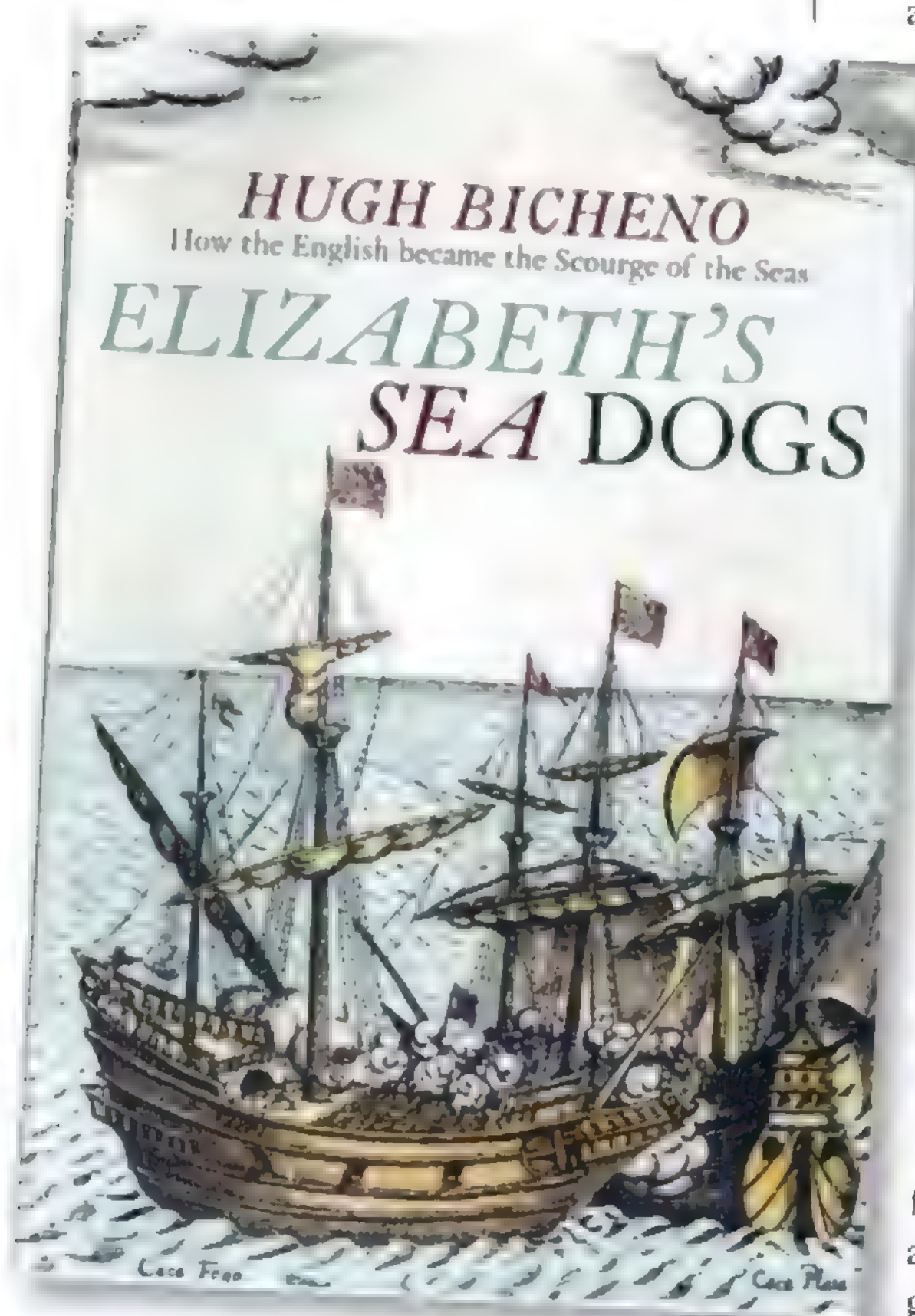
Unless God helps us by a miracle, the English will... knock us to pieces with their culverins, without our being able to do them any serious hurt.

by sending some strange freak of weather, or more probably, by depriving the English of their wits... But unless God helps us by a miracle the English, who have faster and handier ships than ours, and many more long-range guns, and who know their advantage just as well as we do, will never close with us but stand aloof, and knock us to pieces with their culverins, without our being able to do them any serious hurt. So we are sailing against England in the confident hope of a miracle.' This was exactly what happened – without the miracle.

As one would expect with a book by Hugh Bicheno, there are excellent maps, especially those showing the various stages of the battle in 1588 as the English pursued the Armada up channel. These are reproduced from detailed charts commissioned by the Lord High Admiral Howard, drawn by Robert Adams, and published around 1590.

That great military historian, the late Richard Holmes, would have approved, contending that 'military history is no use without battles, and battles are no good without maps'. Bicheno's appendices of ship and vessel types, naval artillery, and other technical detail, add to what is a cracking good read.

Julian Thompson

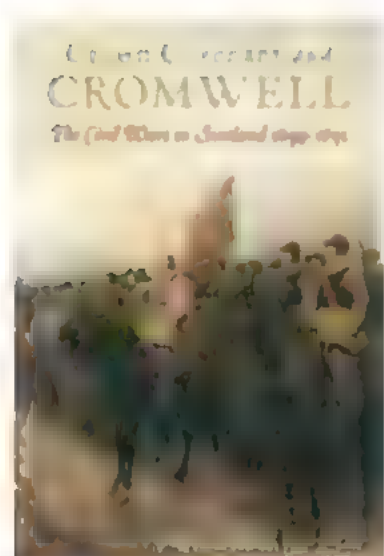


Crown, Covenant, and Cromwell: The Civil Wars in Scotland 1639-1651

Stuart Reid

Frontline Books, £19.99

ISBN 978-1848326873



Some 25 years ago, the epicentre of study of the 'English' Civil Wars was not Cambridge or Oxford, but Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. It was from

here that David Ryan and Partizan Press brought the talents of a new wave of researchers to a wider audience. Among them was Stuart Reid, who probably did more than anyone else to bring the Civil War in Scotland out of the shadows. He is now regarded as the expert on Scotland during the Civil Wars, and *Crown, Covenant, and Cromwell* is his latest study. In it, Reid tells the story of what he calls the 'last Anglo-Scottish War', the wars fought in Scotland and by the Scots in England between 1639 and 1651.

This is a military history, and Reid does his best not to let the politics get in the way. He starts with an introduction to the Scots armies: how they were recruited, led (often by those with experience as mercenaries fighting in the Thirty Years' War), and armed (but treating the Scots artillery rather disparagingly).

Reid then takes the reader chronologically through Scotland's involvement, starting with the Bishops Wars of 1639-1640. He continues with the First Civil War (where the Scots invaded England in support of Parliament), the Second Civil War (where they invaded England in support of Charles I), and the Third Civil War (this time invading England in support of Charles II). All of the major battles are covered, including Marston Moor, Preston, and Worcester.

For those used to the rather romanticised version of the life and campaigns of the Marquis of Montrose, Reid's analysis of the Royalist rebellion of 1644-1645 will come as something of a surprise. Reid is critical of Montrose, especially his continued lack of proper reconnaissance. The highlight of the book is Cromwell's invasion of Scotland in 1650, which culminated in what should have been an English defeat

at Dunbar, but instead turned out to be Cromwell's greatest victory. Reid re-examines the campaign, arguing that instead of neutralising the Royalist threat north of the border, Dunbar in fact made it a reality.

The book concludes with the final Scots defeat at Worcester in 1651, exactly a year to the day after Dunbar, and the surrender of the remaining Scots strongholds in the months that followed. Unfortunately, the story ends here rather than in 1660, and so does not cover the English occupation of Scotland and the governorship of General Monck.

The book is well illustrated, although the reproduction of some of the illustrations is not of the highest quality. And while the text is well supported with a number of maps, if you are not previously acquainted with the topography of some of the campaigns, a few of them are a little confusing. But these are minor points in what is a very good assessment of the Scots armies during the Civil Wars, a subject commonly overlooked.

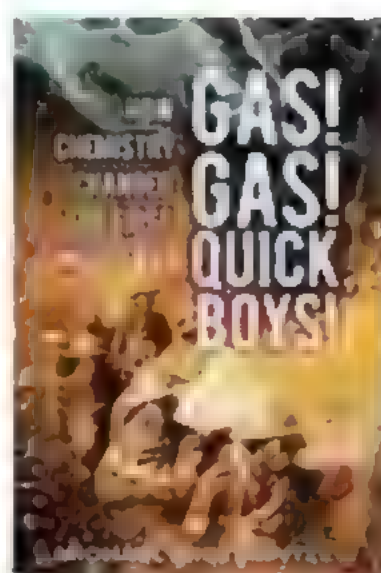
David Flinham

Gas! Gas! Quick Boys! How chemistry changed the First World War

Michael Freemantle

The History Press, £18.99

ISBN 978-0752466019



Freemantle has written a book which is easily read by someone whose last dealings with chemistry was playing around with substances that went

fizz, bubble, and bang in glass flasks over a Bunsen burner in school! The writing is about a complicated subject, yet has been made very accessible and interesting for the lay-reader.

Chemistry touched just about every facet of warfare from the obvious explosives and propellants, to the very important medical uses both to treat the wounded and to prevent infection and disease.

Although the title suggests that the book is merely about how poison gas was used by both sides, its subject matter is immensely wider. Chapters include the design and introduction of hand grenades to the front-line; how

chemicals were needed to make the dyes for the uniforms and for other aspects of camouflage; and the more humane aspects of fighting infection, killing pain, and caring for wounded soldiers.

Each of these chapters looks at the chemicals involved and describes them in straightforward language, naming the leading chemists in the field, on both the Allied and Axis sides. Freemantle makes the point that the First World War 'benefitted' from 100 years of work by chemists prior to 1914 and explains how their work was used and improved upon. He describes how various chemicals and processes could be replicated as natural resources dried up due to blockades and shortages. As each point is discussed, Freemantle is careful to give proper recognition to the chemist or author concerned, and there is an excellent series of notes to each chapter, plus an extensive bibliography at the end. The book is well illustrated with photographs of leading chemists, primitive gas masks, and photographs from the front-line.

The book concludes with a chapter entitled 'The Double Edged Sword', where Freemantle makes the point, 'Chemistry changed the First World War; the war did not change chemistry'. Essentially, chemistry has been around for millennia, especially in the 200 years prior to World War I, but the application of chemistry ensured that the war could take its place as the first really modern conflict, resulting in death on an unprecedented scale. As Freemantle observes, 'The artillery bombardments, the trench and tunnel warfare, would not have been possible without chemicals of one sort or another; every round of ammunition, whether for pistol, rifle, machine-gun, trench mortar, or siege gun relied on the manufacture of explosives and metals.'

The gas attacks of World War I, which thankfully did not recur during World War II, could not have been possible without chemists. Yet for all the offensive uses, chemistry was also instrumental in improvements in healthcare, allowing soldiers to return to the front-line following injuries which in previous conflicts would have left them debilitated.

This book fills a very interesting gap in the writings about the First World War. With the approach of the centenary commemorations, it will be a very useful addition for those interested in that conflict – and how it was made possible.

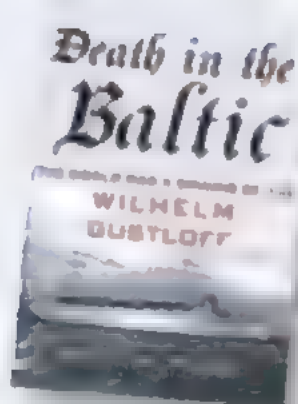
Andy Kay

ON THE HORIZON

Death in the Baltic: the World War II sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* Cathryn J Prince

Palgrave Macmillan, £16.99
ISBN 978-0230341562

Reconstructing this forgotten moment in history, Prince weaves together personal narratives, letters, and the diaries of those who perished to give this WWII tragedy its rightful memorial.



Alexander the Great: the *Anabasis* and the *Indica* Arrian, translated by Martin Hammond

Oxford University Press, £10.99
ISBN 978-0199587247

Arrian sums up the career of Alexander the Great in what is now considered the prime and most detailed extant source for *History of Alexander*.



Conquest: how societies overwhelm others David Day

Oxford University Press, £10.99
ISBN 978-0199668137

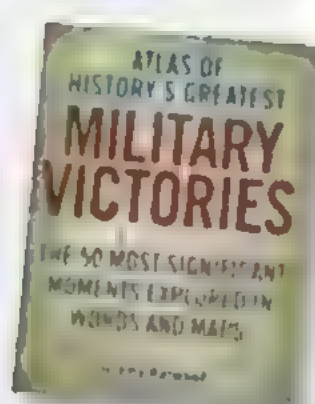
The story of conquest through the ages, from the Normans in England to the Chinese in Tibet, the British and Americans in North America to the Germans in Poland.



Atlas of History's Greatest Military Victories Jeremy Harwood

Icon Books, £12.99
ISBN 978-1848315785

A fascinating full-colour illustrated guide to 50 of history's most important battles, including the struggles of the ancient Greeks and Persians, and Marlborough's defeat of the French at Blenheim in 1704.



Leyte 1944: the soldiers' battle Nathan N Prefer

Casemate, £20
ISBN 978-1612001555

The epic story of the US Army's long-overlooked battle to vindicate MacArthur's 'return', seize back the Philippines, and break the back of Japanese resistance in the western Pacific.



The Motherland Calls: Britain's black servicemen and women 1939-45 Stephen Bourne

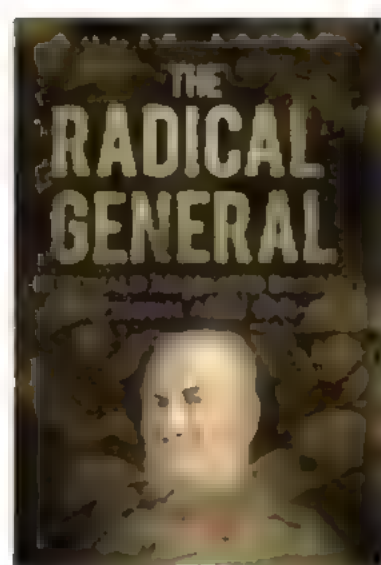
History Press, £12.99
ISBN 978-0752465852

Drawing on expert knowledge and many years of original research, this is a tribute to some of the black servicemen and -women whose contribution to fighting for peace has been overlooked.



The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and Britain's New Model Army 1941-46

Roger Broad
Spellmount, £18.99
ISBN 978-0752465593



The term 'unsung hero' could have been coined in honour of General Sir Ronald Adam, and this is what makes Broad's book such an important addition to the bibliography of World War II senior officers. Adam was Adjutant-General in the darkest days of the war, a post he held until 1946. He threw himself into the task of finding the most qualified officers, NCOs, and technicians needed for an army still organised largely on the Great War model.

The author argues Adam was more overlooked than forgotten, for achievements in organisation and administration do not excite the public as does the flamboyance of a Montgomery or a Slim.

Adam recognised the urgent need to put the selection and training of officers on a scientific basis. In doing so, he ruffled a lot of regimental feathers in bypassing individual regiments and corps to send all recruits through the same basic training. Adam also encouraged open debate on the nature of the war and the enemy, an initiative considered dangerously radical by traditionalists who believed a soldier's duty was 'not to reason why'.

Though having served as a soldier for nearly 40 years at the time of his appointment, Adam came to the army as a 'merchant', as he referred to himself, having been a banker and businessman in British India. This may account for his unorthodox views on organising troops like employees who are motivated to believe in and work hard for their firm's success.

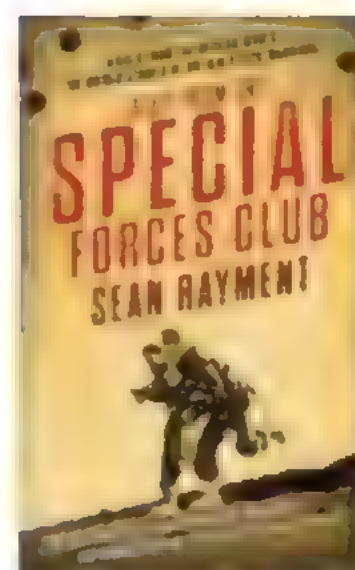
Adam was truly a radical of his day. His views on such subjects as personnel selection and education clashed with the cherished views of the Establishment. But he was a man of strong character, who, in the author's words, managed to 'break up some of the War Office's most elegant and revered Victorian furniture', to the chagrin of leaders from Churchill down.

More of a humanist than a leftist – the label affixed to him by his detractors – Adam would have cheerfully accepted the epithet of 'Blimp Buster'.

Jules Stewart

Tales from the Special Forces Club

Sean Rayment
HarperCollins, £18.99
ISBN 978-0007452538



In an age when few would venture out without a mobile clamped to their heads or manage to find their way to the local pub without the aid of a SatNav, it is refreshing to be taken into the lives of men and women whose survival in wartime depended on the sharpness of their wits and ability to fend for themselves.

In Sean Rayment's delightful compendium of stories from ten former Special Forces members, we meet Mike Sadler, one of the best navigators in the Western Desert. His skills saved lives thanks to his ability 'to sit up at night waiting to catch a star... while everyone else was tucked up and sleeping'.

Sadler's tale, like those of the other nine Second World War veterans of covert operations, began at London's Special Forces Club. In this exclusive and characteristically inconspicuous Knightsbridge town house whose doors, remarkably, opened to women in 1945, Rayment collected his stories of derring-do from survivors of those wartime adventures.

It was at the club that the author first heard of Noreen Riols, the woman who had helped to train agents in the art of counter-espionage during the war. After making contact with Riols, one of the few surviving members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), Rayment embarked on his journey to chronicle the stories of other former members of clandestine operations units.

Rayment introduces us to Captain John Campbell, the last veteran of Popski's Private Army, a raiding unit formed in the Western Desert. Sent out to find out 'what Jerry's up to', Campbell describes the start of his mission: 'At the allotted hour the section extinguished cigarettes and moved off into the desert as the sun began its steady descent beneath the horizon.' Could anyone resist the urge to read on?

Bill Towill describes the horrors of jungle warfare behind enemy lines with the Chindits and Harry Verlander's escape from death by a samurai-sword-wielding Japanese officer is chilling stuff indeed. These are some of the unique people whose exploits the author has set down for posterity, thanks to the Special Forces Club.

Jules Stewart

DOWNLOAD THE MHM DIGITAL EDITION

Military History Monthly is now available as a digital edition which can be downloaded to your **PC, Mac** or **iPad**.



SAVE
UP TO
47%
ON ANNUAL DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Digital Edition is packed with all the in-depth history, real-life stories, fascinating battle reports, and practical advice you would expect from *Military History Monthly* magazine, but in a completely new format.

SAVE MONEY

Up to **47% off** an annual subscription when you go digital.

DOWNLOAD ANYWHERE, READ ANYWHERE

Store our entire back catalogue on one device, and access from anywhere around the world.

ONE SUBSCRIPTION, MULTIPLE FORMATS

One subscription to *Military History Monthly* can be read across many platforms, including home computers and handheld devices such as the iPad.

ADJUSTABLE FONT SIZE FOR EASY VIEWING

Makes reading easy by allowing you to zoom further into pages, and to customise your viewing experience.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.militaryhistory.org/digital

COMING SOON IN

MILITARY
HISTORY
MONTHLY



THE END OF THE BEGINNING

THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC: THE TIDE TURNS

We explore the pivotal maritime battle to beat the U-boats in May 1943.

PLUS all of your regulars:

- News
- Letters
- Your Military History
- War Culture
- Museum
- War on Film
- Behind the Image
- Reviews
- Back to the Drawing Board

A History of the **BRITISH ARMY** IN 25 BATTLES

ALAMEIN, 1942



ALAMEIN, 1942

How Britain's new elite army finished the Africa Nazis inspired battle and began the long march to final victory.



TUNISGRAD

Ork Ramsey analyses the Arab-African campaign that destroyed the Axis force in North Africa.



NASSER'S MISSILES

Roger Howard explores a Cold War drama featuring Nazi scientists, Mossad agents, and a charismatic Arab nationalist demagogue.



LAIRDS OF BATTLE

Ross Cowan disentangles the myths from the truth about the warrior culture of the Scottish Highlanders.

Reserve your
copy with your
newsagent,
or see our
fantastic
subscription
offer on page



26



VISIT

www.military-history.org
for competitions, articles
and more...

For up-to-the-minute news and info, add us:



www.facebook.com/militaryhistorymonthly



twitter.com/milhistmonthly

THE NEXT ISSUE IS ON SALE

11 APRIL 2012

The best cost-saving energy device ever?

Experience an invigorating shower like no other – saving you water, energy and money!

Introducing the Jetstorm, the newest addition to our groundbreaking range of revolutionary water, efficient shower heads from Ecocamel. With several years of scientific research, we have been able to produce a shower head that instantly increases pressure and performance to create an exhilarating shower experience, whilst using significantly less water. So confident are we that you'll love your new powerful shower, we're offering Military History Monthly readers a special 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE* and, for a limited time only, 40% off the RRP.

The science

This pioneering new shower head is called the Jetstorm because of its patented dual valve 'AirCore' technology. Developed to infuse a storm of minute air bubbles into each droplet which are then blasted, jet like, onto your skin... we guarantee you'll increase your shower's power instantly and reduces your water consumption considerably! The droplets, now bursting with air, are so much lighter than normal and, rather than just bouncing off you, they saturate and spread all over your body – a sensational experience

Save more than just water

These are tough economic times, with a 'double-dip' recession looming and energy prices set to rise by up to 19%, everyone is trying to cut their costs. The Jetstorm not only helps cut your water bills but reduces your energy bills too! Using less water means using less energy to heat it, saving you ££££s on your energy bills – SIMPLE!

Do I have to call a plumber?

Absolutely not, it really could not be easier. It takes just a few seconds to unscrew your existing shower head and pop on your new water-efficient Jetstorm.

Which Jetstorm is right for me?

If you have a normal gravity, main-pressure or pump system just order the Original Jetstorm. If you use a low-pressure system or electric shower, ask for the Jetstorm E



Suitable for all shower systems



ECOCAMEL
POWERFUL SHOWER POWERFUL SAVINGS

"We tried out five eco shower heads checking their flow rate and quality of experience. Our favourite is the Ecocamel Jetstorm, it felt powerful and invigorating."

Good Housekeeping Institute

SAVE £20
WAS £49.95
**NOW
£29.95**

Not sure which one is right for you?
Call one of our friendly experts on
0208 211 3666 – who will be happy to help

Don't just take our word for it, read what the experts say...

"(My husband) grudgingly admits the new model works better than the conventional shower head so it's staying on the shower – much to my and the household purse's delight!"

Sarah Lonsdale – Sunday Telegraph

"Definitely one of the simplest ways to make financial savings in the home without having to make too many changes to your routine."

Justin Harper – Daily Mail

"The Ecocamel was really impressive and I've trialled a few aerated shower heads before, so I can honestly say that it is one of the best, 10/10."

Chris Haslam – House Beautiful

Even hotels have been clamouring to make the savings!

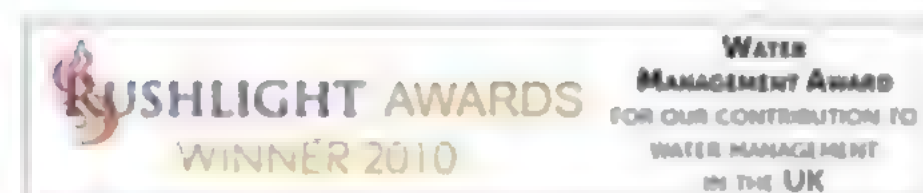
"I made my decision to use Ecocamel for two reasons: firstly the savings I made – the Ecocamel shower heads will save me annually over £4,000 of combined energy and water cost per hotel. Secondly, the shower head gave a very refreshing and excellent experience which is very important to our guests."

Mr T. G. General Manager, The Days Inn Hotel, Hyde Park

We were even featured on Sir Lord Sugar's 'The Apprentice'... fame indeed!



BRITISH INVENTION
AND DESIGN
BY ROBIN WHITFIELD



Start enjoying your new powerful shower today and begin to save water, energy and money!

Call **0208 211 3666** or visit **ecocamel.co.uk** Quote **MHM068** when ordering

Alternatively fill out our priority order form below and send to: **ECOCAMEL Ltd 233 Woodhouse Road, London, N129BD**

*Use an Ecocamel shower head for 30 days. If you are dissatisfied for any reason, then please return to us for a full refund.

YES please send me my:

Please tick as appropriate

☐ Buy 1 Original Jetstorm £29.95 + £3.95 p&p = **£33.90**

For standard systems ☐ BLUE ☐ GREY

☐ Buy 1 Jetstorm-E £29.95 + £3.95 p&p = **£33.90**

For electric and low pressure systems ☐ BLUE ☐ GREY

☐ Buy 2 Jetstorm's **SAVE £10** £49.90 + £3.95 p&p = **£53.85**

For standard systems ☐ BLUE ☐ GREY

☐ Buy 2 Jetstorm-E's **SAVE £10** £49.90 + £3.95 p&p = **£53.85**

For electric and low pressure systems ☐ BLUE ☐ GREY

GRAND TOTAL:

I enclose a Cheque/PO made payable to Ecocamel Ltd
or pay by credit/debit card

Card No.

Start Date / / Expiry Date / /

Issue No. Security Code

Signature

ECOCAMEL **MHM068**
POWERFUL SHOWER

Name

Address

Post Code

Email

Telephone

If you do NOT wish to receive further SPECIAL OFFERS from us, or from companies we

POST TO: **ECOCAMEL Ltd 233 Woodhouse Road, London, N129BD**

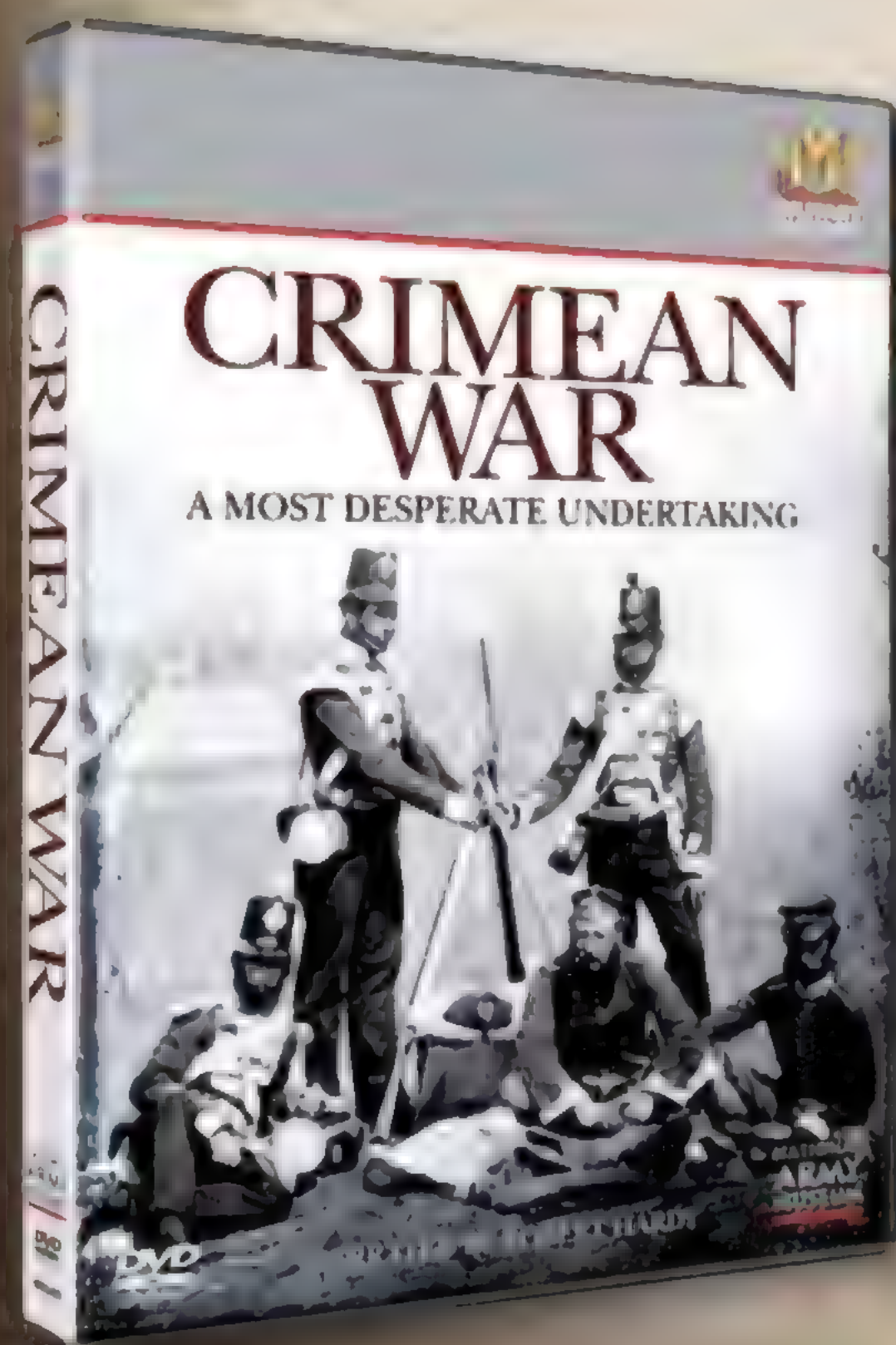
COMPETITION

MILITARY
HISTORY
MONTHLY

This month we have
FIVE copies of

CRIMEAN WAR

a most desperate undertaking
to be won!



In the spring of 1854, British troops and their French allies were sailing east to the Black Sea to help the Turks fight off Russia's advances. The British army sailing that spring had been described as the finest ever to leave Britain's shores. But within months those troops were dying in scores, falling victim to cholera and dysentery epidemics. The army's medical support was found to be scandalously inadequate. Battles were mismanaged, leading to infamous blunders like the Charge of the Light Brigade. When winter came, the archaic army support services meant British troops were left frozen and on the brink of starvation.

This programme uses the letters, diaries, and journals of soldiers who fought in the Crimea to tell the story in their own words. The collaboration between HISTORY and the National Army Museum has resulted in a distinctive and moving documentary.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply visit www.military-history.org and answer the following questions:

1. In which year did the Crimean War begin?
2. What is the surname of Florence, the famous nurse from the Crimean War?
3. In which month was the Charge of the Light Brigade?

NATIONAL
ARMY
MUSEUM

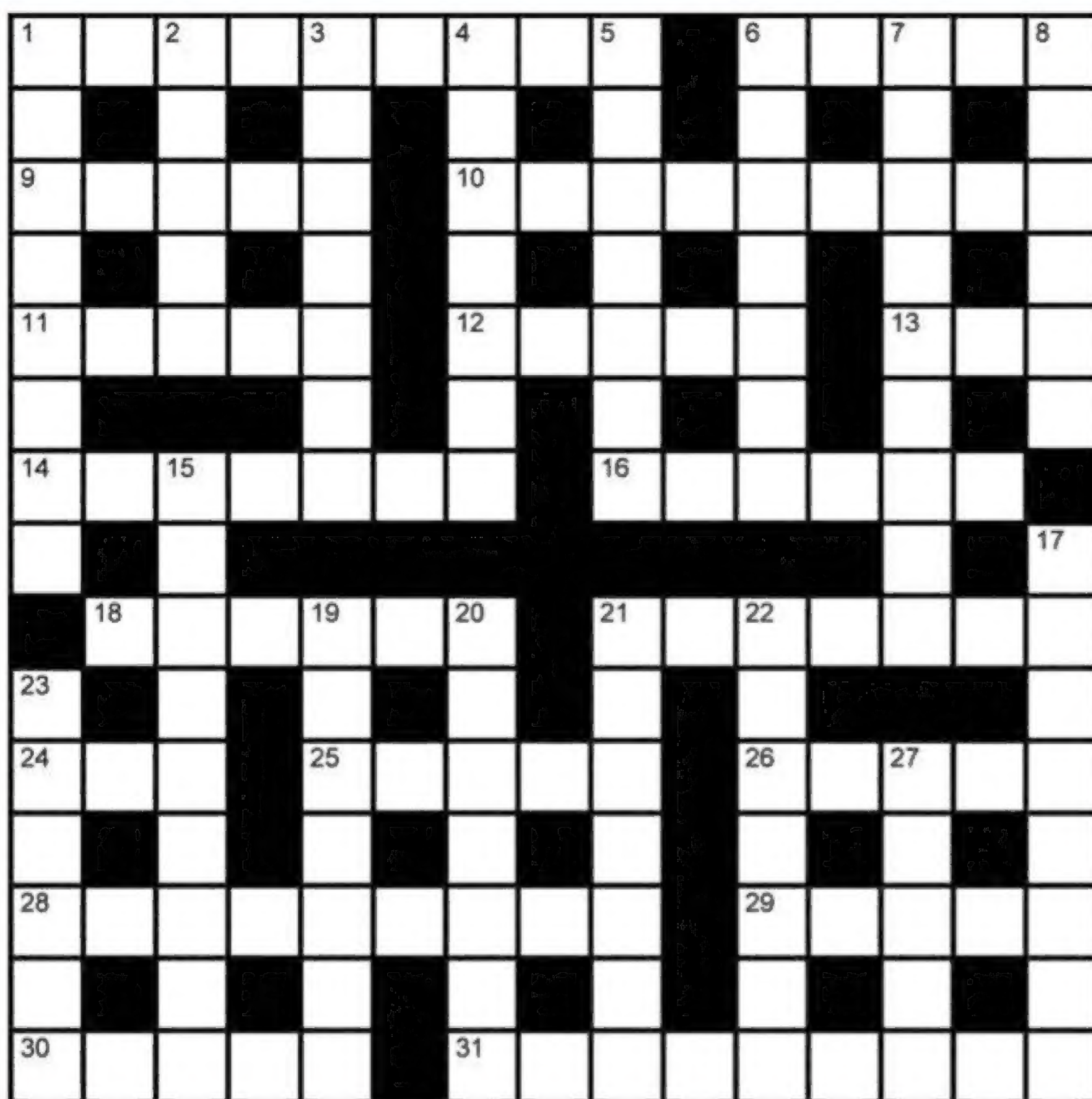
M
MILITARY
HISTORY

CRIMEAN WAR

A MOST DESPERATE UNDERTAKING



TO ENTER THE QUIZ go to www.military-history.org



MHM CROSSWORD

Test your military history knowledge in our regular crossword.

The answers will be revealed in next month's issue of *MHM*.

ACROSS

- 1 British tank of the post-war era (9)
- 6 Company that built the Stalwart amphibious vehicle (5)
- 9 Informal name for a British soldier (5)
- 10 'Forward _____', US term for personnel operating on the front line to co-ordinate artillery fire (9)
- 11 Battle fought on the Ayrshire coast in October 1263 (5)
- 12 Guards regiment whose motto is *Quis separabit* (5)
- 13 Colonel _____, slave who became a Loyalist guerrilla leader during the American War of Independence (3)
- 14 City besieged and invaded by Ottoman forces in September 1570 (7)
- 16 Swing-wing fighter built by Grumman (6)
- 18 _____ Bras, battle fought two days before Waterloo (6)
- 21 Junior cavalry officers, now called second lieutenants in most British regiments (7)
- 24 The forerunner of the RAF (3)
- 25 Joseph _____, Union general, commander of the XX Corps during the Carolinas Campaign (5)
- 26 Cavalry sword (5)
- 28 Dull green colour used for military uniforms and vehicles (5, 4)
- 29 City in north-west Portugal, from which the Moors were expelled in 1040 (5)
- 30 Dutch city where William the Silent was assassinated in July 1584 (5)
- 31 Units of an air force or cavalry regiment (9)

DOWN

- 1 Flying boat built by the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, first flown in March 1935 (8)
- 2 Belgian city taken by the French in 1692 (5)
- 3 _____ S Grant, commander of the Union armies at the end of the American Civil War (7)
- 4 Island captured by US forces in March 1945 (3, 4)
- 5 _____'s Horse, a unit raised in 1899 in the Cape Colony (7)
- 6 First name of US president who served in the Illinois Militia during the Black Hawk War of 1832 (7)
- 7 South-east Asian city occupied by Japanese forces from March to September 1945 (9)
- 8 Heavy cruiser, the flagship of vice-admiral Cedric Holland during the reoccupation of Singapore (6)
- 15 British tank of World War II (9)
- 17 Metal-tipped spears used by tribes of southern Africa (8)
- 19 Fighter built by Hawker, a development of the earlier Typhoon (7)
- 20 Clarence _____, US general, commander of the 26th Division in World War I (7)
- 21 Military tactical transport aircraft built by de Havilland Canada, first flown in 1958 (7)
- 22 Creek in Montana, site of a battle in 1876 (7)
- 23 _____ Ridley, actor, fondly remembered as Private Godfrey in *Dad's Army*, who was wounded at the Battle of the Somme (6)
- 27 _____ *Two Zero*, book by Andy McNab about his service in the SAS during the first Iraq War (5)

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Now you can have your opinions on everything *MHM* heard online as well as in print. Follow us on **Twitter@MilHistMonthly**, or take a look at our Facebook page for daily news, books, and article updates at www.facebook.com/MilitaryHistoryMonthly.

Think you have spotted an error? Disagree with a viewpoint? Enjoying the mag? Visit www.military-history.org to post your comments on a wide range of different articles. Alternatively send an email to feedback@military-history.org.

ADD US NOW
and have your say



CAPTION COMPETITION



We continue our online caption competition with an image from our article on General Ronald Adam. Pit your wit against *MHM* readers at www.military-history.org/competitions.

WINNER:

It became apparent that the costume department had messed up when the cast of *Stomp* asked for something a little more 'Latin'.

Mikey

RUNNERS-UP:

And now, for my next number, I'll just play the first thing that comes to my head... 'Fangs for the Memories!'

Joe Agius

Stand back lads, I've got the horn...

Marcus Aurelius Repath



Think you can do better?

Log onto www.military-history.org/competitions to enter the next CAPTION COMPETITION. Flex your funny bone and be in with a chance of getting your caption published in the next issue of *Military History Monthly*!

A MARCH ISSUE | MHM30

ANSWERS
ACROSS 6 Vandeleur, 10 'Nimrod', 11 Okinawa, 12 Punic, 13 Aldershot, 16 *A Bridge Too Far*, 19 Landmines, 22 Lorca, 24 Curragh, 26 Enigma, 27/8 Anwar Sadat, 28 Lightning.
DOWN 1 Caligula, 2 Slade, 3 Juno, 4 Calais, 5 Navajo, 7 Dornier, 9 Kington, 14 Liège, 15 Admiral, 17 Florian, 18 Richmond, 20 Ancona, 21 Durham, 23 Delhi, 25 Haig.

The *Biber* submarine

When the German navy captured a British Welman midget submarine in November 1943, Commander Hans Bartels set about improving its crude design and delivered the prototype *Biber* ('Beaver') in March 1944. There were just two problems with this project. First, he copied the wrong submarine. Second, some of the improvements had unexpected, and ultimately fatal, consequences.

It is easy to understand why midget submarines appealed to the *Kriegsmarine*. Following 'Black May' in 1943, when 25% of the operational U-boats were lost in just one month, Germany was losing submarines faster than it could replace them. Midget submarines could be built quickly and cheaply, required just one operator, and were almost impossible to detect using ASDIC. In September 1943, midget submarines of the Royal Navy had crippled the battleship *Tirpitz* anchored in a Norwegian fjord. However, the Germans never saw the X-Craft actually used in the attack –

Below The *Biber*'s cramped control room.



Carbon-monoxide fumes from the engine poisoned the crew.



Above A *Biber* submarine at the Imperial War Museum.

and these had been substantially larger than the Welman, with a four-man crew.

Welmans relied on battery power, restricting both speed and range, so the Germans added a 32hp engine to the *Biber*. Usually a diesel motor would propel a U-boat on the surface and recharge its batteries, but an Opel petrol engine was chosen as it was cheap and long-running. This proved to be the submarine's Achilles heel. Carbon-monoxide fumes from the engine poisoned the crew, but, because the symptoms were similar to those of seasickness, the men affected were not

necessarily aware they were being gassed. *Biber* 90, on display in the Imperial War Museum, was found drifting off Dover in December 1944 with its pilot dead at the controls.

Other improvements included the addition of a periscope, but it was forward-mounted with only 40 degrees of vision, so the operator had no idea what was behind him before surfacing. Lacking compensating and trimming tanks, *Bibers* were almost impossible to operate at periscope depth anyway, so the torpedoes had to be launched while surfaced. These had a reduced range, to make them light enough for the tiny craft, so the pilot had to get close to his target and surface to attack it, eliminating the element of surprise.

On 30 August 1944, after just three weeks' training, 20 *Bibers* set out from Fecamp in Normandy on their first patrol. They claimed a landing craft and Liberty ship, but no Allied losses were recorded, so this must have been wishful thinking. On the plus side, they all returned safely, a record that would not be repeated.

Having relocated to the Waal/Maas estuary in the Netherlands, *Bibers* claimed their one and only victory, sinking the cargo ship *Alan A Dale* on 23 December. All 65 crewmen survived.

The *Biber* pilots were not so fortunate. Of the 18 that sailed, only one returned; British MTBs sank four, one hit a mine, and 12 simply disappeared. This pattern continued until the end of the war. To make matters worse, there were two occasions when the *Biber*'s externally mounted torpedoes were accidentally fired in dock, destroying 25 submarines.

In total 324 *Bibers* were built, yet they sank just one Allied merchantman. They claimed the lives of many sailors, but unfortunately they were all German. ☒

WEFA TOURS

for your best view of the battlefield

Technology Tour

5 - 8 April 2013

This year's Technology Tour studies air power on the Western Front and is jointly guided by Peter Hart, author of the acclaimed "Bloody April", and Clive Harris. The tour will study the emergence of air power and covers Ypres, Arras and the Somme. We will also look at the work of observer balloons and RFA liaison work above the trenches, in addition to the better known fighter aces of the period. Access to private museums and air-related artefacts not usually on display is planned in order to make this a unique tour for all those with an interest in the war in the air.

£425pp (sharing a twin room); £90 single supplement

For further information:

Web: www.westernfrontassociation.com

Email: tours@westernfrontassociation.com

Tel: 01438 791020

in association with

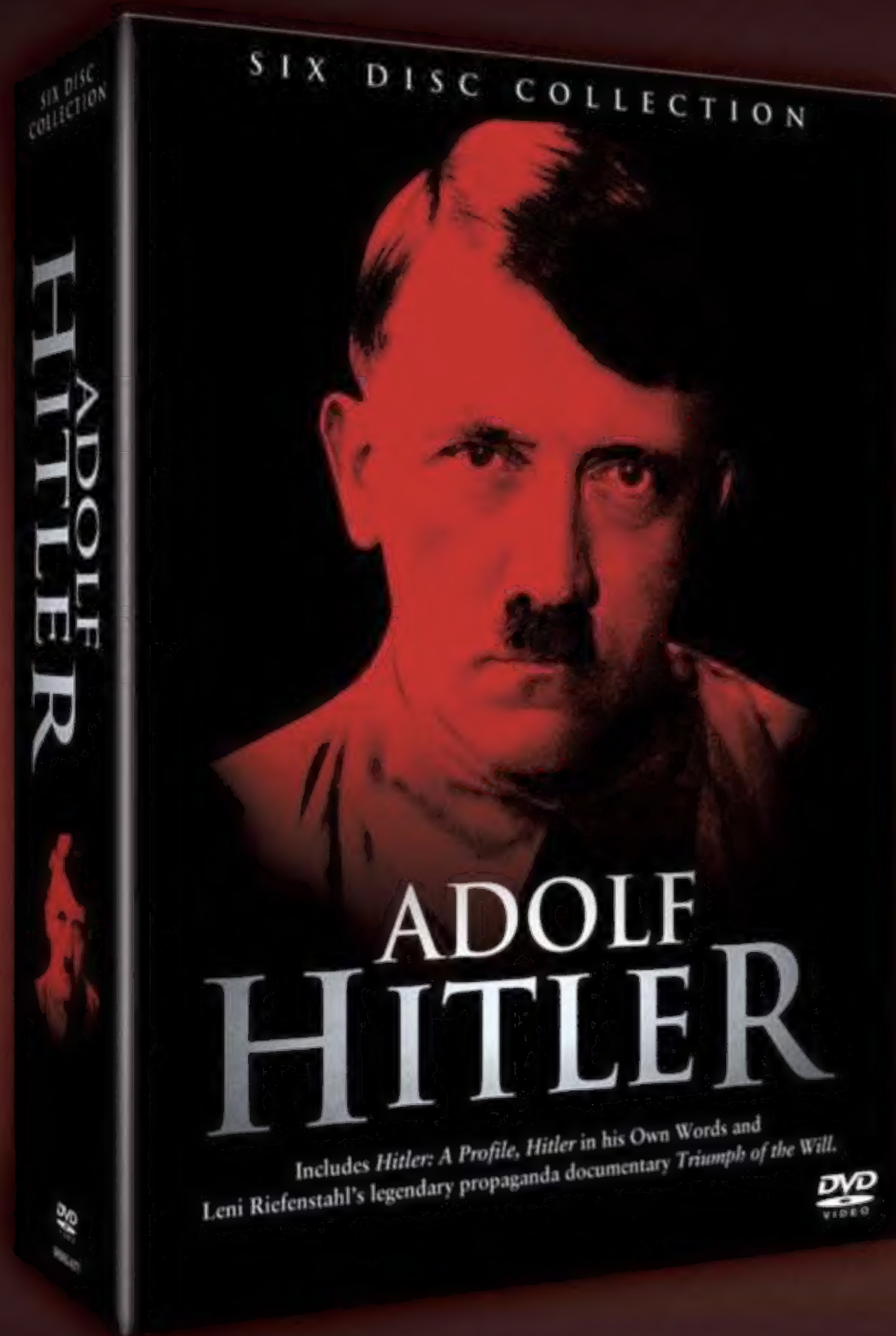


THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

The Great War 1914-18: understood

ADOLF HITLER

An in-depth look at history's most infamous leader



AVAILABLE FOR
THE FIRST TIME EVER
AS A 6 DVD COMPLETE
COLLECTION

INCLUDES BONUS DISC:
'Triumph Of The Will'
Riefenstahl's masterpiece documenting
the Nuremberg Party Rally

ALSO AVAILABLE
HITLER'S HENCHMEN
VOLUMES ONE & TWO



BUY NOW

amazon.co.uk

Free Super Saver Delivery and Unlimited One-Day Delivery with Amazon Prime are available.
Terms and Conditions apply. See Amazon.co.uk for details.



Follow us  @goentertainuk for news on all our latest releases

Visit our website at www.goentertain.tv  www.facebook.com/goentertain